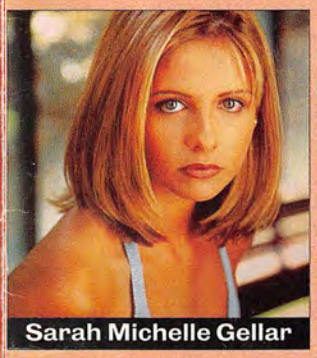
LOVE | BUGS

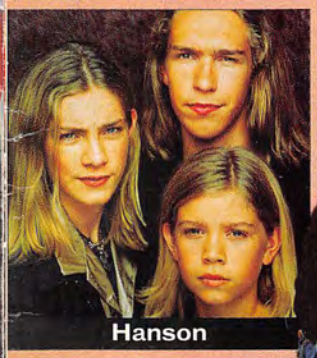
〈 Dharma & Greg | Starship Troopers 〉

Entertainment Weekly

#405 • NOVEMBER 14, 1997



Sarah Michelle Gellar



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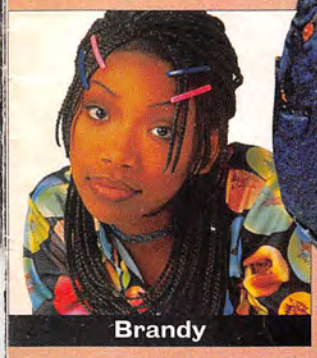

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How the Next Generation Of Young Stars Is Sparking A Billion-Dollar Boom In Hollywood

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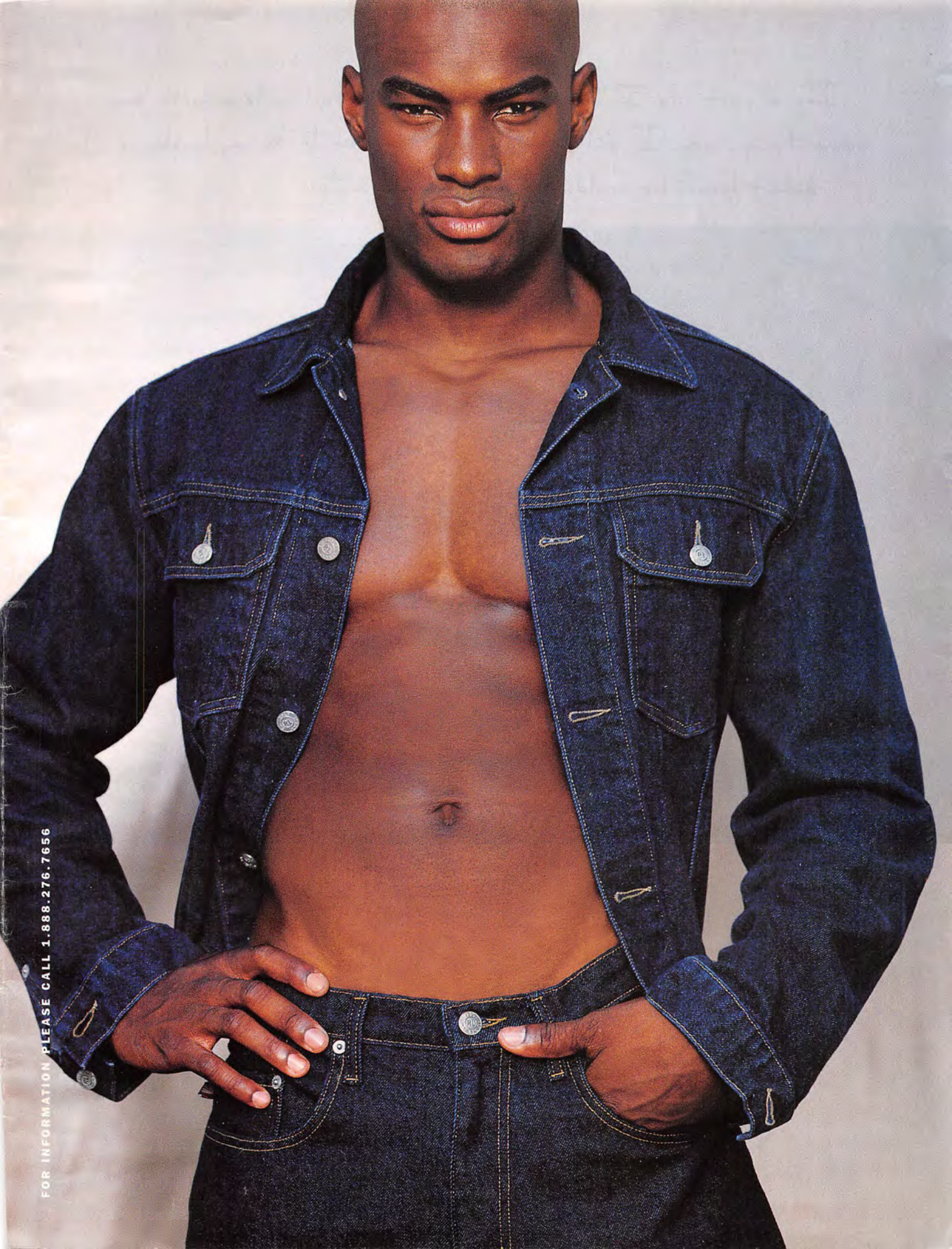
RALPH LAUREN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Entertainment WEEKLY
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 1997

46 SPOT ON! *Dharma & Greg*'s Jenna Elfman dolls up ABC's killer Wednesday-night lineup

(COVER) *DHARMA & GREG*: PHOTOGRAPH BY STEPHANIE PFRIENDER; *STARSHIP TROOPERS*: TIPPETT STUDIO; SARAH MICHELLE GELLAR: FRANK OCKENFELS 3/©WARNER BROS.; HANSON: FRANK OCKENFELS 3/OUTLINE; BRANDY: NEAL PRESTON/OUTLINE; (THIS PAGE) STYLING: KIM YOUNG/GABLER/NOONAN; HAIR: KEVIN RYAN/BIANCA BLYTH BEAUTY; MAKEUP: MONIKA BLUNDER/REX; DRESS: RESURRECTION VINTAGE

ON THE COVER:
Jennifer Love Hewitt photographed by Andrew Eccles/Fox

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CLASS OF '97:
Discuss your favorite teen idols on EW Online's message boards.

NEWS & NOTES

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24 Teen Steam They're baaaaaaaaaack! Once again, teenagers—and a whole new crop of performers—are powering the entertainment business. **PLUS:** A guide to the leaders of the new brat pack—from the *Party of Five* mob to *I Know What You Did Last Summer*'s sexy quartet. BY CHRIS NASHAWATY

37 B.O. Confidential We know what you saw last fall—and what you didn't. The results: Little movies made big bucks, and big stars made even bigger mistakes. Go figure. BY GREGG KILDAY

42 Quit Buggin' Me They've got legs, and they know how to use 'em. Up close and personal with the intricate insects of *Starship Troopers*. BY CHRIS NASHAWATY

46 Instant Dharma ABC finds gooey riches in its spunky romantic comedy *Dharma & Greg*—and in Jenna Elfman, the season's sweetly loopy breakout star. BY DAN SNIERSON

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mail

'Life' Lessons

AS THE U.S. LINE PRODUCER for *A Life Less Ordinary*, filmed in and around Salt Lake City, I advised producer Andrew Macdonald, and the director, Danny Boyle, to take a look at Utah. Once they scouted Salt Lake City they agreed to base the film there. At no time was the Utah decision based on "plenty of cheap nonunion labor." The decision was reached using creative criteria alone, and, as an added bonus, plenty of talented and ethical labor was available. There was never a need to "bus in" anyone. I found it most distressing to read such an ungrateful article (#402, Oct. 24), and I hope that the people who worked on this film are not as offended. The darlings of the British film industry should mind their manners.

MARGARET HILLIARD
Line Producer,
A Life Less Ordinary
Park City, Utah

IF THE BRITS CAN'T handle a little Utah culture shock, I know some people who can. Ever hear of the Sundance Film Festival?

MONICA JOHNS
Provo, Utah

PRODUCER ANDREW MACdonald was disappointed that *Trainspotting* grossed only $17 million on U.S. soil, and he blamed the American audience for its performance. If Macdonald wants us to give his films a chance, shouldn't he give us one, too? Ewan McGregor found it odd that in Utah, "when people come to your house and they see beer or wine bottles lying around, God, you get filthy looks." Is disapproval toward alcoholism and untidiness unique to Utah? Would the rest of the world walk into a person's home, see it littered with liquor containers, and say, "Wow, a heavy drinker! Cool! And I love what you've done with the place"? Do you really want to know the secret to successful filmmaking in America? Stop insulting the cultures, lifestyles, and religions of the people you're trying to lure into the theater.

CHAD HARRIS
Yipikiae@aol.com
Layton, Utah

AS A (FORMERLY) ENthusiastic subscriber, I want to congratulate you on finally printing the issue we can't show our mothers, what with the S&M cover, the sleazy Charlize Theron layout, and the titillating remarks about Mark Wahlberg's genitalia. You have certainly lived up to your name in portraying Hollywood for what it is: sexually delusional, morally void, and pathetically pretentious.

JASON NYBERG
jasnyberg@aol.com
Buena Park, Calif.

Tales From the Set

I REALLY ENJOYED THE article "Extra! Extra!" by David Bryson. Truly, the hurdles of failure are more common than the accolades of triumph. I hope that in the end he finds due success.

DAVID MONTGOMERY
Alexandria, Va.

Keep On Rockin'

WHILE LAMENTING that a once-revered artist has fallen from grace is all but a national pastime, David Browne's crying ("The Thrill Is Gone") seems misplaced. Yes, Elvis Costello and David Byrne have taken radically different creative paths from those that brought them fame. It may even be true that not all of those ventures have surpassed their earlier work, but to me, the best musicians are those who dance on the edge of what is expected and accepted; and albums like *The Juliet Letters* and *Rei Momo* are examples of that kind of departure from the norm.

SCOTT RUSSELL
Riverside, Calif.

CORRECTIONS: Walking Thunder *is rated PG (Video). In the photo of The Mitchell Trio, David Boise, not Joe Frazier, is the singer to the left of John Denver ("Take Me Home").*

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LEAVE IT TO DIVA

Whitney Houston snubs Rosie O'Donnell, capping a turbulent year for the prickly singer.

by Benjamin Svetkey

IT IS THE BEST OF TIMES, it is the worst of times—at least if you're **Whitney Houston**.

With the success of her Nov. 2 *Cinderella* special on ABC, the 34-year-old pop princess should be riding higher than those soaring F-sharps in "I Will Always Love You." But although the two-hour fairy tale, which Houston executive-produced as well as starred in, gave the network its best Sunday night in 10 years, beating such heavyweights as CBS' *Touched by an Angel* and Fox's *The Simpsons* and *King of the Hill* block, Houston's triumph was tempered by a messy contretemps with **Rosie O'Donnell** earlier in the week. And as anyone in Hollywood can tell you, it's not nice—or prudent—to anger the Queen of Nice.

What ticked off O'Donnell was Houston's last-minute no-show on *The Rosie O'Donnell Show*. Houston had been slated to hype *Cinderella* on the program Oct. 30—the first day of November sweeps. But at 9:15 a.m., according to sources—45 minutes before the show was to air live—Houston bagged her appearance, citing an incapacitating stomach flu. The abrupt cancellation had the normally effusive O'Donnell seeing red. "Whitney is not here—she's ill," the host half-cracked on the air. "I hope she's *very* ill."

"A guest like Whitney Houston canceling 45 minutes before a live show is equivalent to a 747 crashing a minute before airtime on a news program," sympathizes a producer of another daytime talk show. "You're caught with your pants down. This is how producers earn their stomach linings."

"Oh, yeah, it definitely screwed up the show," O'Donnell told EW a few days after the incident. "We had to stretch out the end. We had a sit-down talk segment with [*Cinderella* actor] Paolo Montalban, who was not scheduled to speak. It threw [everything] off. I've been on live TV for a year and a half, and I've never missed a show. Most people show up, especially when they have a movie that they're producing and starring in to sell."

Houston added insult to injury later in the day by accompanying husband **Bobby Brown** when he went to tape his appearance on *The Late Show With*

ILLUSTRATION BY TIM BOWER

David Letterman. "She was feeling better," says publicist Lois Smith, who represents both Houston and O'Donnell. "She went with Bobby to give him her support. She felt she would get in and out without anybody noticing. She got sick again. It was a stupid thing to do." (Coincidentally, Brown suffered his own meltdown on MTV News the weekend of Nov. 1 when he unexpectedly scorched everyone from his old **New Edition** cronies to **Kenneth "Babyface" Edmonds**, a frequent Houston collaborator.)

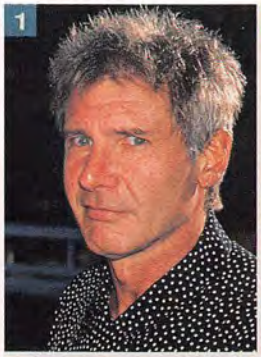
The O'Donnell flap marked another headline-grabbing incident for Houston—merely the latest in a distressing string this year. Although she has always had something of a prima donna reputation, her problems recently—say, since *The Preacher's Wife* became her first big-screen bomb last December—have apparently moved to another level. Clearly *something* was wrong during Houston's Oct. 5 live HBO concert, in which she strained to sing her tunes, reeled off a random, bewildering medley of tributes to dead celebrities—including the **Notorious B.I.G.** and **Princess Diana**—and dripped more flop sweat than Nixon. One reviewer likened the performance to "a tape-delayed near-death experience." And according to an on-set source, she almost never arrived on time during the filming of *Cinderella*, a pet project she nurtured from scratch. Then there was that mysterious facial slash last summer, while Houston was vacationing in Italy with Brown. She told Italian police she cut herself on a rock during a swim off a yacht; a member of the crew reportedly said Houston was cut on the boat.

And now the *Rosie* debacle. Caught spinning both of her clients' stories was publicist Smith. Although she denies Houston gave O'Donnell only 45 minutes' notice, claiming it was more like two hours, Smith admits that "Rosie was not a happy camper." Publicly, O'Donnell laced her show that day with gibes at Houston. Privately, according to sources familiar with the situation, the talk-show host was so steamed she ordered Smith to dump Houston as a client, or else O'Donnell herself would find a new publicist. "Rosie did not give me any kind of ultimatum," Smith says firmly, insisting that O'Donnell isn't holding a grudge. Still, the talk-show host doesn't sound completely placated: "I'm sure that one day, when Whitney has another album, she will come back on the show. I'm not mad at her personally, [but] I did find it a little startling."

In any case, Paolo Montalban shouldn't leave town. ■ *(With reporting by Joe Flint, Anna Holmes, and Degen Pener)*

NOT TOTALLY ROSIE: O'Donnell is not amused

FRANK MICELOTTA



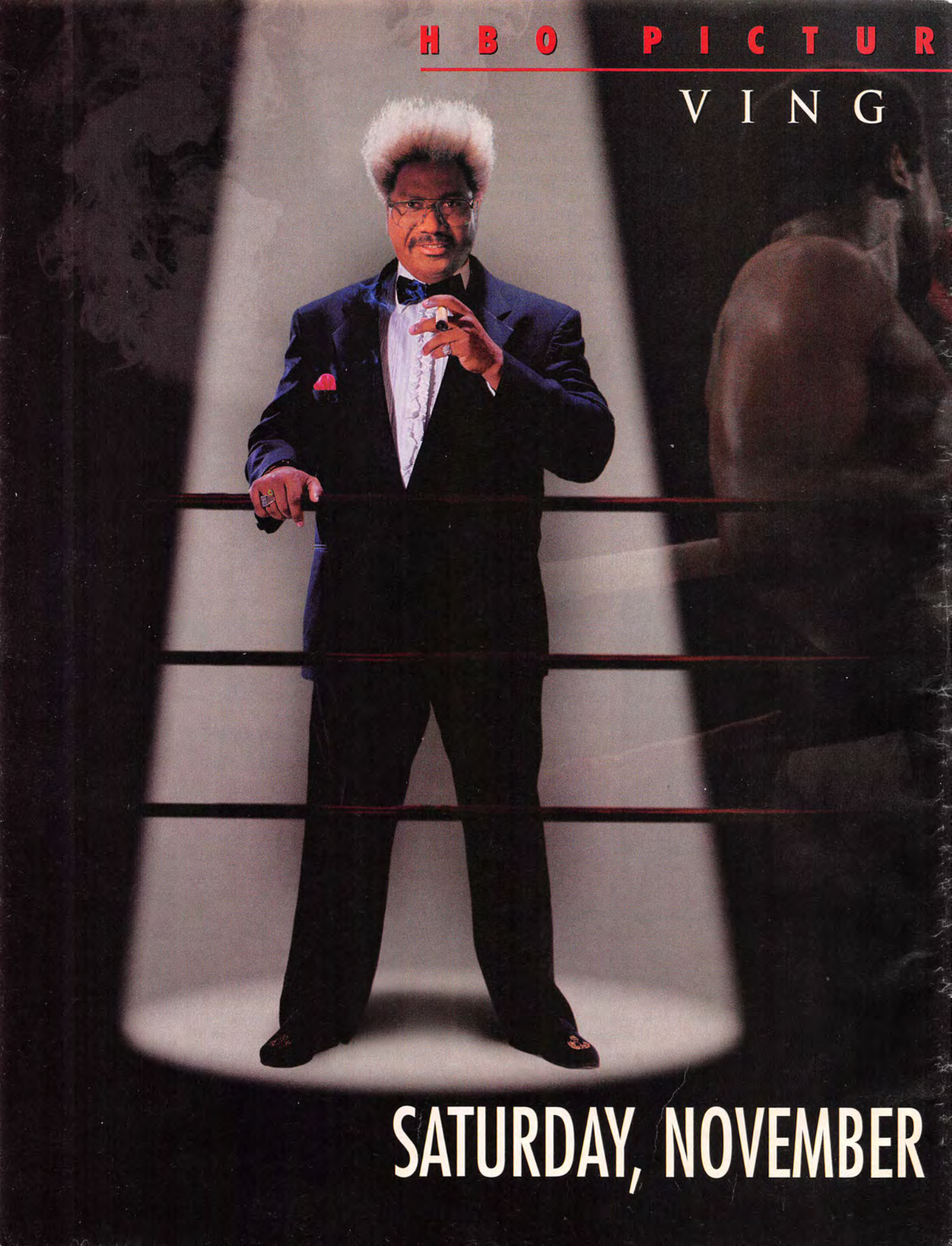
WORLD PARTY: Doing their bit for Mother Earth, (1) a Ford explorer; (2) Hurley makes like Eve; (3) Newton-John and daughter Chloe are hopelessly devoted; (4) Louis-Dreyfus (right) and Hewitt make a party of two; (5) Kirsten Dunst issues a call to arms

FORD: NEWTON-JOHN, AND DUNST: JIM SMEAL/RON GALELLA; HURLEY, HEWITT AND LOUIS-DREYFUS: STEVE GRANITZ/RETNA

Happy Earth Day

scene

WHO SAYS HOLLYWOOD is only about excess? On Nov. 2, stars gathered in Pacific Palisades, Calif., to reuse, recycle, and party at the annual Environmental Media Awards. Among celebs honoring TV and films that increase environmental awareness were HARRISON FORD, JULIA LOUIS-DREYFUS, OLIVIA NEWTON-JOHN, and JOHN TRAVOLTA. (Well, Travolta was there in spirit: He accepted an award via video.) *Party of Five*'s JENNIFER LOVE HEWITT displayed the proper earth-friendly attitude. "We recycle on the show every single day," she says. "From cans of soda to script pages." Meanwhile, ELIZABETH HURLEY and HUGH GRANT, on hand to bestow the Feature Film award to *Fly Away Home*, admit they're new to the cause. "Today is our first day being involved with anything environmental," says Hurley. "We have the organic carrot from time to time, but we're going to learn and do more." —*Kristen Baldwin, with reporting by Zorianna Kit*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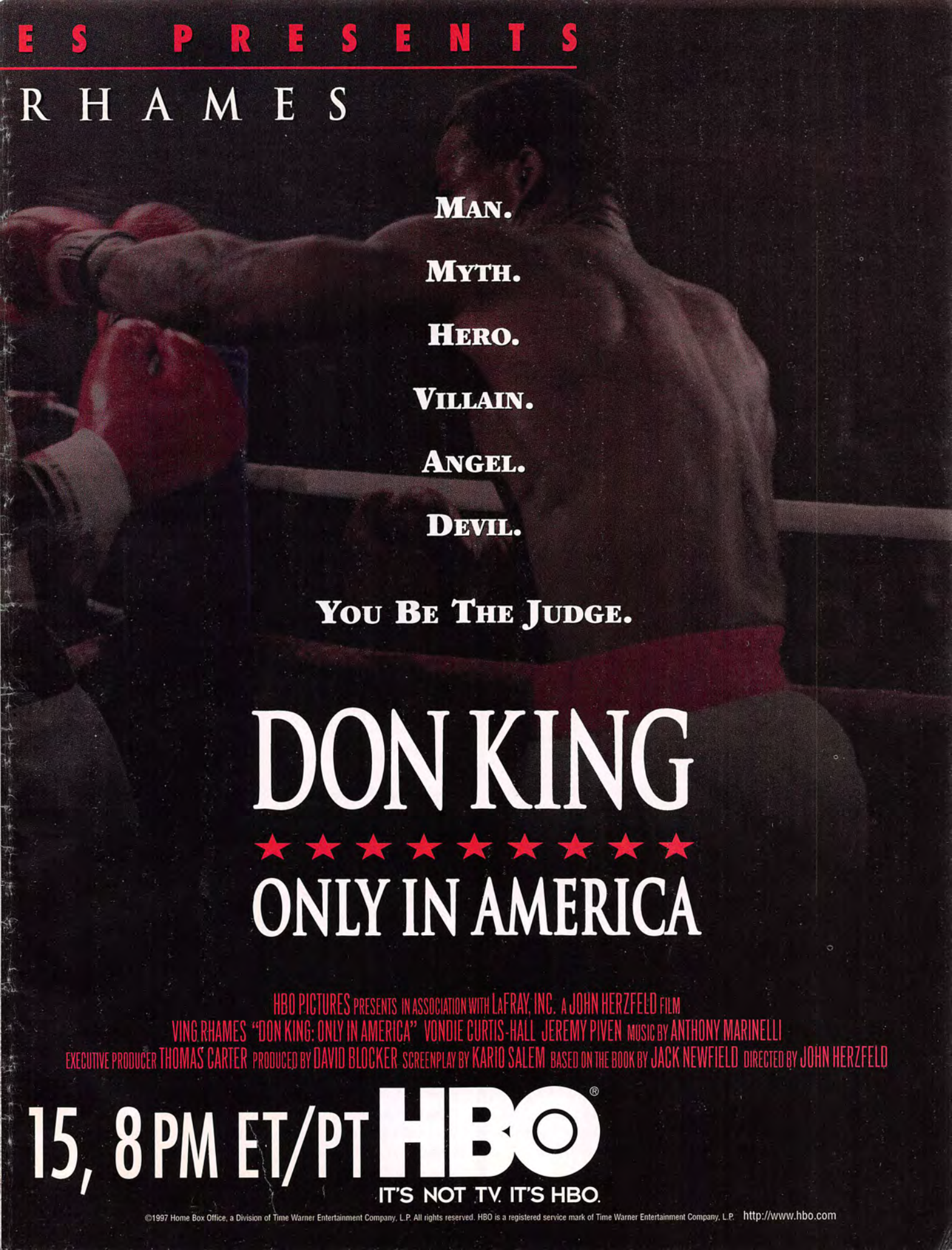
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jim mullen's

HOT Sheet

What the country is talking about this week...

1 ***Mad City*** Dustin Hoffman plays a slimy TV reporter who manipulates the news. We have to leave the house to see that?

2 ***Bean*** Will the British TV character's humor work in America? Or will we need Jim Carrey's talking butt to explain it to us?

3 ***Starship Troopers*** Giant insects from outer space try to take over the earth. And they started with my apartment.

4 ***Eve's Bayou*** A film about all kinds of black magic and hanky-panky. *Valley of the Voodoo Dolls.*

◂ 5 **Marv Albert** The unemployed sportscaster will appear on Letterman. What to wear—the dog collar or the teddy?

6 **Disney** The company is banned in China for making anticommunist films. Unlike in our democracy, where it's being boycotted for being anti-Christian.

7 **Jewel** A book of poems she will produce/Because hit songs give her the juice/And Emily Dickinson can only yearn/For the 2 million clams that Jewel will earn.

8 **Mike Tyson** The former champ broke a rib when he was thrown from his motorcycle. So he bit off a handlebar.

9 **Metallica** The world's most pretentious band couldn't find a single major U.S. city that would let them perform for free. That's why Philadelphia got them.

10 ***Jeopardy!*** The game show did a taping in Washington. It was a bit different—each contestant had a lawyer beside him.

11 **Saddam Hussein** How do you say "I make Homer Simpson look smart" in Arabic?

12 **Courtney Love** The former abuser is now making anti-drug messages. You mean she's out of the music business?

13 **Spike Lee** The Knicks' No. 1 fan will direct Lakers commercials. That's the only way to pay for those courtside seats?

14 **O.J.'s mansion** You can have the empty Brentwood estate for $4 million. Of course, the only people with that kind of money are defense lawyers.

15 **Howard Stern** Is he practicing medicine without a license by giving women breast exams on the air? It doesn't matter—anyone who lets him is brain-dead already.

spice check

SUDDENLY, THEY'RE EVERYWHERE. Forgive us for sounding surprised, but we figured the Spice Girls' 15 minutes would have been over hours ago. Instead, the Spice wagon rolls on. How long can these star tartlets (startlets?) continue storming the pop-cultural radar screen? To keep tabs, we've decided to chart their relative *spiciness*—we define it as exposure times attitude. The past few weeks have been a royal time for the Spicy Ones: First, the single from the group's sophomore album, *Spice Up Your Life*, debuted in the U.K. at No. 1, booting Elton John's tribute to Princess Diana out of the top spot. Then the Girls journeyed down to South Africa for a benefit concert. Who benefited? Well, judging from the starstruck smile on his face, it was concert attendee Prince Harry, who went backstage to sidle up to Baby Spice and hold hands with Posh Spice. Then again, it could have been South African president Nelson Mandela, who reportedly said of meeting the group: "This is one of the greatest moments of my life." Everyone take a deep breath... —*Allison Gaines*

CHARLES AND HARRY GET SPICY

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burning question

Q Is it us, or are the four kids in *I Know What You Did Last Summer* stalked by the Gorton's Fisherman?

A "We had a joke about that," says *Summer* screenwriter **Kevin Williamson**, who initially had **Sarah Michelle Gellar**'s character make a crack about the killer's eerie but unintentional resemblance to the famous mascot. "When she's talking about going to the parade," says Williamson, "she said, 'I'm supposed to look for the fish-stick guy?'" But director **Jim Gillespie** cut the line because he thought mocking the killer might decrease the creep-out factor. As far as Gorton's is concerned, what resemblance? "The Gorton's Fisherman is a kind and honorable man. Obviously, there's no relation," says senior marketing manager Jodi Nedrow-Counihan. "Besides, the Gorton's Fisherman wears a *yellow* slicker. [*Summer*'s villain sports dark green.] Anyone in non-yellow would be a fisherman impostor." —*Dave Karger*

HOOK, LINE, AND SNICKER: The killer of *Summer* and his look-alike

SPICE GIRLS: ADIL BRADLOW/AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS; *I KNOW WHAT YOU DID LAST SUMMER*: ROBERT ZUCKERMAN

ILLUSTRATION BY TOM BACHTELL

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SMITH

THE TUBER MASHES ITS WAY ONTO 'DREW CAREY'

FLASHES

TAKING STOCK The market action was frantic Monday, Oct. 27, as more than 95 million shares changed hands on the heaviest day of trading in history. We're talking, of course, about the Hollywood Stock Exchange, the online market simulation in which players buy and sell "shares" of celebs and movies. Oh, yeah, Black Monday was kind of a busy day on the slightly larger New York Stock Exchange as well. "A lot of our players play on both the NYSE and our exchange," HSX cofounder Max Keiser says of the coincidental market activity. "And they have strategies that overlap both exchanges." So what commodities were hot on the virtual big board? In general, players went for quality, selling lower-rated stocks such as **Jennifer Tilly** and **Johnny Depp** and plowing funds into blue-chip investments such as **Will Smith** and **Jim Carrey**. Maybe in the future analysts will look to the HSX as a predictor of real-life activity. After all, says Keiser, "we like to think [the HSX] is where the selling started that day." —*Suna Chang*

SPUD STUD Everyone knows Hollywood is a dog-eat-dog world. The question is, do those dogs eat vegetables? In one of the stranger PR gimmicks in recent memory, L.A. radio deejays Kevin Ryder and Bean Baxter of KROQ's *The Kevin & Bean Show* set out to make a star out of a potato. That's right, a spud. "There's no relationship between talent and celebrity," says Baxter, who explains that their experiment was inspired by the success of the **Spice Girls**. "[They were designed by] someone who said, 'Let's create a group with very little ability and see how far we can take them.'" After selecting a russet from a Hollywood supermarket, Baxter and Ryder talked up the taterlet with celebrity guests on their radio show. Soon the tuber had landed cameos on MTV's *Live*, E!'s *The Gossip Show*, NBC's soap opera *Sunset Beach*, and ABC's *Cracker*. Coming up for the spud: appearances on *The Drew Carey Show* (Nov. 12) and *Friends* (Nov. 20). With such an impressive list of credits under its skin, what's in the future for this hot potato? "We think a porno movie," says Baxter. "Then we're going to kill him off." Does that mean—*gasp!*—french fries? —*Tricia Laine*

<< random quote

"I'm so relieved when someone's beeper goes off during a bad movie. I always stand up and yell, 'There's my ride!'" —JANEANE GAROFALO

casting call

They may still want to rock & roll all night, but now the members of Kiss also want to sink their spiked heels into Hollywood. While a new album and yet another massive tour are planned for next year, the big news is that the band has teamed up with *Rocky* exec producer Gene Kirkwood to create a movie that'll offer a revealing look at the musicians behind the make-up. (Cameron Crowe and David Fincher reportedly have expressed interest in directing.) To prepare for this momentous unveiling, EW offers a few casting suggestions. —*Shawna Malcom*

GENE SIMMONS
tough-talking, blood-spewing bass player

CHAZZ PALMINTERI
tough-talking, blood-shedding Mob player

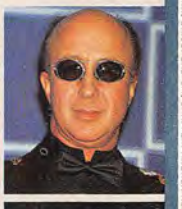
ACE FREHLEY
wild, hard-living lead guitarist

EDDIE VAN HALEN
wild, hard-living lead guitarist

PAUL STANLEY
screeching vocalist

HOWARD STERN
screeching shock jock

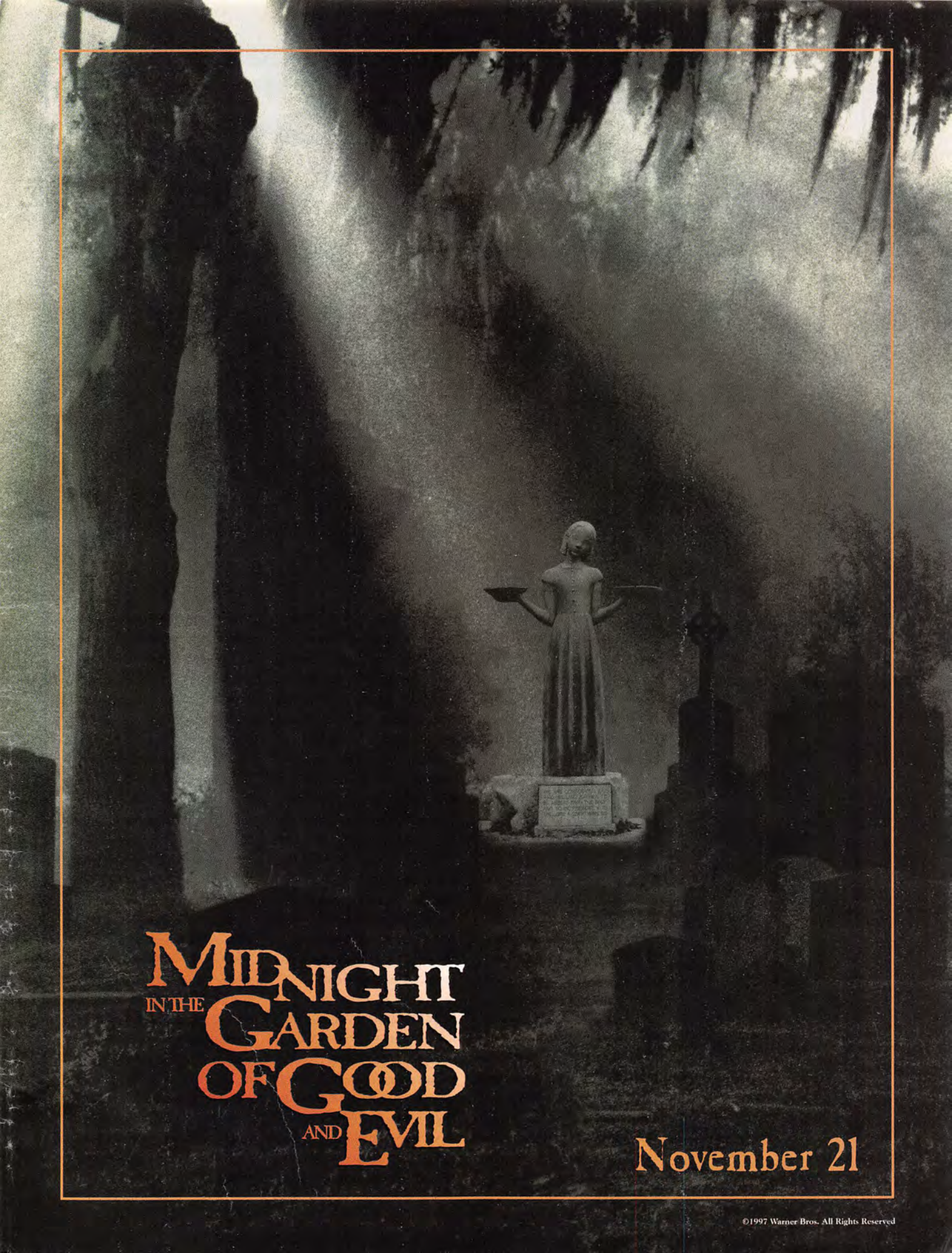
PETER CRISS
catlike drummer



PAUL SHAFFER
drumlike bandleader

SMITH: MICHAEL O'NEILL/OUTLINE; CAREY: DANNY FELD; SIMMONS: MARK SOLOMON/CORBIS; PALMINTERI: HENRY MCGEE/GLOBE; FREHLEY: A.J. PANTHOS/LFI; VAN HALEN: STEVE GRANITZ/RETNA; STANLEY: STEVEN WHITSETT/CORBIS; STERN: ARMANDO GALLO/RETNA; CRISS: UAZ/LFI; SHAFFER: ANDREA RENAULT/GLOBE

ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID COWLES



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Monitor

PRESTON

HACKETT

PRESTON: LISA ROSE/GLOBE; HACKETT: JOHN SPELLMAN/RETNA

DEALS Network-less since 1995, when she was fired from the *CBS Evening News* after her ill-fated stint as coanchor with Dan Rather, TV newswoman Connie Chung, 51, will join ABC News as a special correspondent. She'll contribute to several ABC news programs and fill in as a substitute anchor.

LAWSUITS Actor Steven Seagal, 45, filed a $25 million breach of contract suit against Prince Abdulilah Bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia, Oct. 20, in L.A. In court papers, Seagal claims that Prince Abdulilah had agreed in 1992 to provide $30 million to finance the film *Man of Honor*, which Seagal was to coproduce and star in. However, after putting up $1.65 million to begin preproduction in 1993, Prince Abdulilah refused to provide any more money. Prince Abdulilah couldn't be reached for comment.... Actress Kelly Preston, 35, obtained a temporary restraining order against Fort Lauderdale waiter Joseph Cheffo, 30, on Oct. 23, in Miami, for allegedly stalking and harassing her on the set of her upcoming movie, *Holy Man*. According to court papers, Preston claims Cheffo wrote an "extremely offensive and disturbing" letter to the actress that makes sexual comments and reveals that Cheffo "may have been obsessed with [Preston] for approximately 15 years." Cheffo couldn't be reached for comment.

RECOVERING Comedian Buddy Hackett, 73, was released from Mercy Center hospital in Aurora, Ill., Nov. 2, after being admitted for an irregular heartbeat and shortness of breath. According to Hackett's wife, Sherry, the comedian was getting ready to perform in Aurora when he suffered an adverse reaction to medication he'd taken for recent dental work. Hackett is doing well and has returned to his home in L.A.

DEATHS Screenwriter Paul Jarrico, 82, of injuries sustained in a car accident, Oct. 28, in Oxnard, Calif. After writing a number of films in the 1930s and '40s—including 1941's *Tom, Dick and Harry*, for which he received an Oscar nomination—Jarrico was blacklisted when he refused to testify before the House Committee on Un-American Activities in 1947. In 1953, he produced *Salt of the Earth*, openly employing several blacklisted artists. Ironically, Jarrico was on his way home after being honored at a ceremony marking the 50th anniversary of the HUAC hearings when his car ran off the road and collided with a tree. —*Tricia Laine*

ILLUSTRATION BY BARRY BLITT

PHOTO MICHEL COMTE

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SHIPPING NEWS: DiCaprio and Cameron meet the press (left); police restrain overzealous fans

Big in Japan

being there The Tokyo International Film Festival is *Titanic*'s first port of call. **by Nisid Hajari**

THE SUN HAS SET early on this first day of November, and by 5 p.m. the teenage girls jammed six deep along a tree-lined street in Tokyo's Shibuya neighborhood are swathed in shadow. The youngest among them still wear their blue school uniforms. Some have camped here outside Tokyo's Orchard Hall theater for three nights; one claims she staked her spot a week earlier. Nao Yamada, 17, arrived only at noon. "I wanted to come earlier, but I was in the hospital," she says sadly and mysteriously.

Yamada and her fervent compatriots have taken up a favorite Hollywood pastime—waiting for *Titanic*. After the seemingly endless months of hype and gossip, director **James Cameron**'s $200 million-plus epic is finally making its world premiere at, of all places, the Tokyo International Film Festival. That the Hollywood blockbuster is headlining an event accustomed to paint-drying social dramas and documentaries strikes many observers as odd. The official line from both Cameron and *Titanic*'s international distributor, Twentieth Century Fox (Paramount is handling the film domestically), is that Japan's $1.21 billion box office is the largest single foreign market for American films and that Cameron's films have historically done well in Japan.

But Tokyo's English-language dailies have hardly taken notice of *Titanic*'s arrival. That may be because the crowds here at Orchard Hall are gathered not so much for the movie but for a glimpse of the film's star, heavy-lidded heartthrob **Leonardo DiCaprio**. "I think he is a genius of acting," Yamada sighs. Clearly, DiCaprio, not the movie, is the main event. As a precaution, Fox has announced it would deploy 49 guards to protect the actor and Cameron. Smart move: The instant their car arrives, the squealing mob overpowers Tokyo police, engulfing the vehicle. Cameron makes his way through the crowd and dashes inside; DiCaprio is hustled through a side entrance. In minutes, the show is over, although confused fans mill about hopefully.

Some of the teens are luckier than others. A number of them have managed to secure *Titanic* tickets; in fact, judging from the chatter, seemingly half the 2,000 attendees are DiCaprio cultists. The din increases when the actor appears on stage just before the three-hour and 14-minute movie unspools, and declares Japanese fans to be "the best and most loyal in the world." DiCaprio's every gesture is greeted with cries of "Leo! Leo!"—or more accurately, "Lay-O! Lay-O!" (One desperate lover wails, "Romeo, O Romeo! Wherefore art thou Romeo?" as the *Romeo & Juliet* star slips backstage.)

FOREIGN LEGIONS: Japan loves Cameron

As for the movie itself, the response is unequivocal: Its conclusion brings loud and sustained applause. (The Stateside reviews that appear two days later are equally enthusiastic: "A complex and radiant tale that essays both mankind's destructive arrogance and its noble endurance," gushes the *Hollywood Reporter*.) Later, at a press conference in Tokyo, a pleased Cameron reflects on the success of Fox's marketing gamble. "I always thought a Japanese audience would embrace a film on a large topic with strong emotional content," says the director. "And judging by the initial reaction, it looks like I was right." That's one country down, the world to go. ■

PHOTOGRAPHS BY TOM WAGNER/SABA

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AUSTIN POWER

TWO FILM FESTS AND A TALENT STAMPEDE SPUR HOLLYWOOD TO CREATE AN OUTPOST IN THE LONE STAR STATE

BY JOE NICK PATOSKI

EVER SINCE local hero **Willie Nelson** turned Austin, Tex., into a country-music hot spot in the '70s, this Sunbelt city with a population of 540,000 has relished its reputation as a hip alternative to Nashville.

Times have changed. These days, Austin feels more like a hip alternative to Hollywood.

Wander into any coffeehouse or bar on Congress Avenue and you'll hear buzzwords like *option* and *greenlighted*. The local grapevine is now ripe with gossip about the town's burgeoning film community, which includes hot talent like directors **Richard Linklater** (*SubUrbia*, *Before Sunrise*) and **Robert Rodriguez** (*From Dusk Till Dawn*); *King of the Hill* creator **Mike Judge**; and bona fide maverick **Terrence Malick**—who, after lying low in Austin since bailing out of Hollywood nearly 20 years ago, began directing *The Thin Red Line* this past June. The town even has a hot wire to Hollywood, thanks to cyberspace VIP—and Austin native—**Harry Knowles**, 25, and his daily movie bulletin (*www.aint-it-cool-news.com*).

As *King*'s Everyman hero Hank Hill might muse: *What the heck's going on?*

"The big difference [about Austin] is it's not just a film community, but a film *culture*," says Linklater, who grew up in Huntsville, Tex., believing he had to go to L.A. or New York to be a moviemaker. "Anyone's success is everyone's success in Austin." Producer **Lynda Obst** (*Contact*), who bought a house in nearby Fredricksburg, Tex., in 1993, says, "There's something about Austin that brings out the creative side in people. The community...[is] very bohemian. People are becoming intoxicated with this place."

ILLUSTRATION BY CALEF BROWN

OUT IN AUSTIN'S SPACE

AT HOME ON THE RANGE

BY DAY filmmakers ramble through the prairies, pine forests, and hills of Austin and its environs—which is why, come sundown, they're anxious to check out the town's nightlife. Here's a brief rundown of Austin's most star-studded spots.

■ **BEST CELEB WATCHING:** **McConaughey and his *Newton Boys* hit the BBQ-and-music-joint Stubb's, sort of a Texas Spago.**

■ **BEST BLUES CLUB:** **Has to be Antone's, in the Warehouse District—Austin's most famous club. A favorite of Judge and new girl in town Bullock, who just bought a house in town.**

■ **BEST L.A. SPOT IN AUSTIN:** **Speakeasy, tucked away in an alley in the Warehouse District, houses Linklater's screening room and specializes in chic martinis and big cigars.**

■ **BEST LOUNGE:** ***Blue Velvet* lives at the Carousel Lounge, where Linklater hangs whenever Tarantino is in town.**

■ **BEST MOVIE HOUSE:** **The Alamo Draft House Cinema, in the Warehouse District, specializes in first- and second-run films, with beer to wash down the popcorn. Only in Texas.**

REMEMBER THE A LA MODE: McConaughey, left, and Bullock aren't Tex exempt

Hollywood is eagerly bellying up, thanks to the city's two major film festivals. Last March, **Woody Harrelson, Uma Thurman, Bill Paxton, Brendan Fraser,** and **Quentin Tarantino** and **Mira Sorvino** joined in the mass pub crawl during the South By Southwest conference—called the music industry's answer to Sundance—which recently added a movie component. More recently, at the Austin Film Festival, held Oct. 2–9, recent transplant **Sandra Bullock** and **Oliver Stone** casually hobnobbed at Antone's Night Club, while established Hollywood screenwriters **Andrew W. Marlowe** (*Air Force One*) and **Eric Roth** (*Forrest Gump*) joined panel discussions. (The winner of the festival's 1994 screenplay competition recently made it to the screen as **Alicia Silverstone**'s *Excess Baggage*.)

Austin's film role is not unlike the local music scene's anti-Nashville status, first articulated during the '70s when country-music outlaws like Nelson, **Joe Ely,** and **Junior Brown** flocked to the city; the era spawned PBS' long-running *Austin City Limits*.

Its journey as a movie epicenter may have begun with **Tobe Hooper**'s 1974 *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, which proved inexpensive films could be made in Texas. The state got even more buzz during ex-governor Ann Richards' 1991–95 term. An avid film buff who courted Hollywood during her campaigns, Richards was frequently a beacon for the city's charms through her appearances on Letterman. The University of Texas' first-rate film department also burnished the artist-friendly vibe: UT students have included Linklater, Rodriguez, and **Joel Coen** (1985's *Blood Simple* was made in Austin), as well as actors **Matthew McConaughey** and **Renée Zellweger**, UT grads who were in Linklater's *Dazed and Confused*—in addition to appearing in *Texas Chainsaw Massacre: The Next Generation*.

It was Linklater's breakthrough 1991 indie hit *Slacker*, made for $23,000 and eventually grossing over $1 million, that transformed the city's rep as a sleepy college town, music haven, and seat of state government. "Rick showed us that you could do it all in Austin," says Rodriguez, who made his own mark with 1993's *El Mariachi* before scoring big with *Desperado* and *From Dusk Till Dawn*—and then moving to Austin for good. "The great thing about being here is you're completely under Hollywood's radar, with a lot more control."

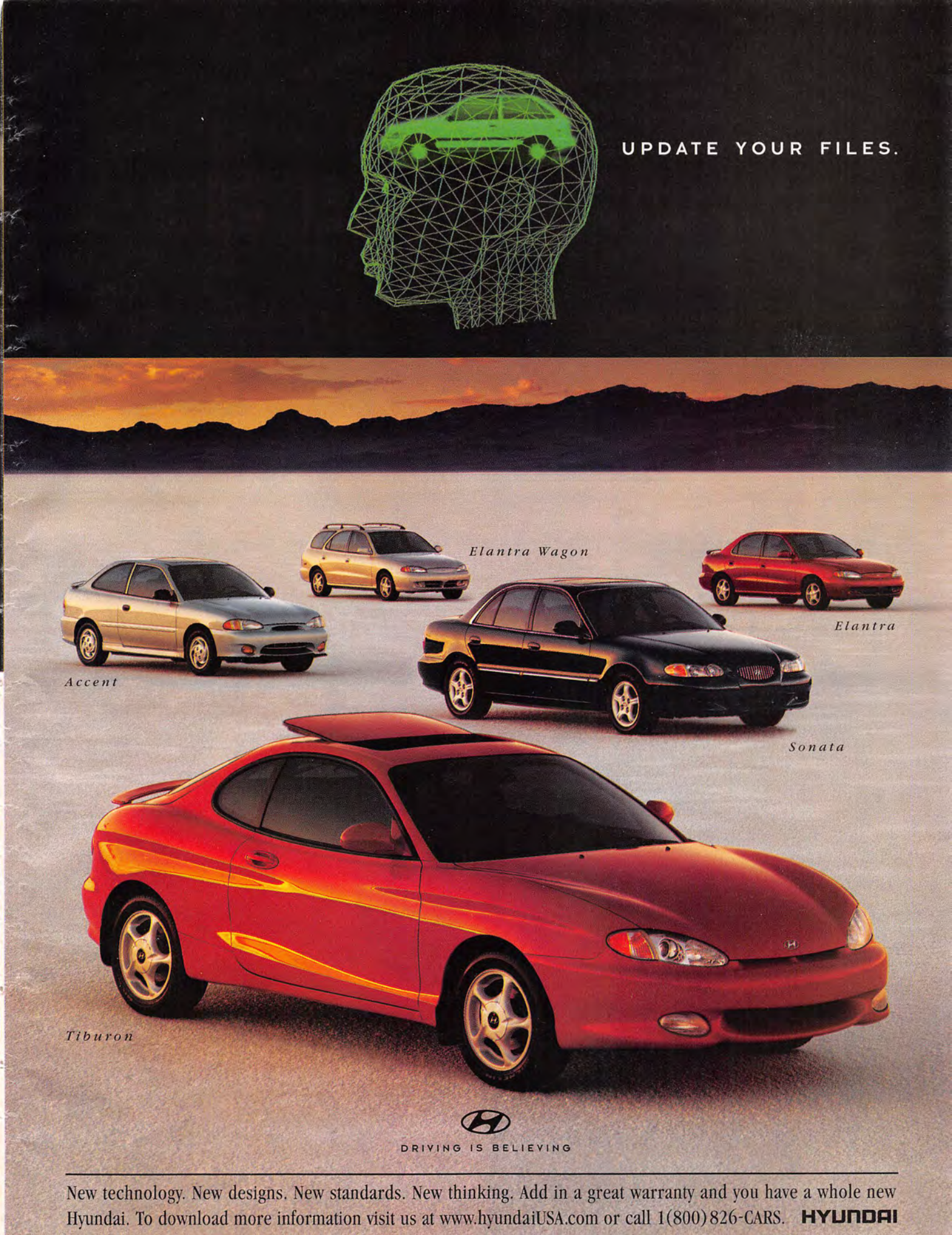
Thanks to *Beavis and Butt-head*, cartoonist Judge already had a modicum of control when he relocated to central Texas in '94, began working on Fox's *King of the Hill*, and fell in with Linklater and Rodriguez. Not surprisingly, the trio's work reflects Austin's music and film zeitgeist: *King* is rife not only with musician jokes but also local celeb cameos, like guitar-store owner/Austin fixture Ray Hennig. And Linklater's hired local songwriters to re-create music from the '20s and '30s for his current project, *The Newton Boys*, starring McConaughey and **Ethan Hawke**, while Rodriguez is joining forces with gaming wiz **Chris Roberts** to develop videogames for Digital Anvil, a software company based in Austin's version of Silicon Valley.

But not everything's golden in the heart of Texas. Austin's postproduction facilities are limited, so film must be flown to the West Coast for processing. And the city may soon become a victim of its own success: With Hollywood moving in, it's hard to live a laid-back life like the characters in MTV's current *Austin Stories*, loosely based on *Slacker*.

Yet Obst—whose *Hope Floats*, shot in nearby Smithville, Tex., will be released next spring—believes the film community will continue to flourish, largely because of groups like the Austin Film Society, founded by Linklater in 1985, which doled out $50,000 in grants last year to Texas indie filmmakers. "I'm amazed how the Film Society draws hundreds of people every week to see obscure, esoteric work," says Obst. "Even with the promise of a free dinner and valet parking, you can't get that many people to a screening in Hollywood."

With that kind of town spirit, Austin may have to change its moniker from the Live Music Capital of the World to the Alternative Film Capital of the World. "A few years ago, everyone in [the city] was a guitar player," says Austin Film Festival organizer Marsha Milam. "Now they're guitar players and screenwriters. Everybody's got a story to tell, and they want to tell it on the big screen." ■

MCCONAUGHEY: VISAGES; BULLOCK: STEVE GRANITZ/RETNA



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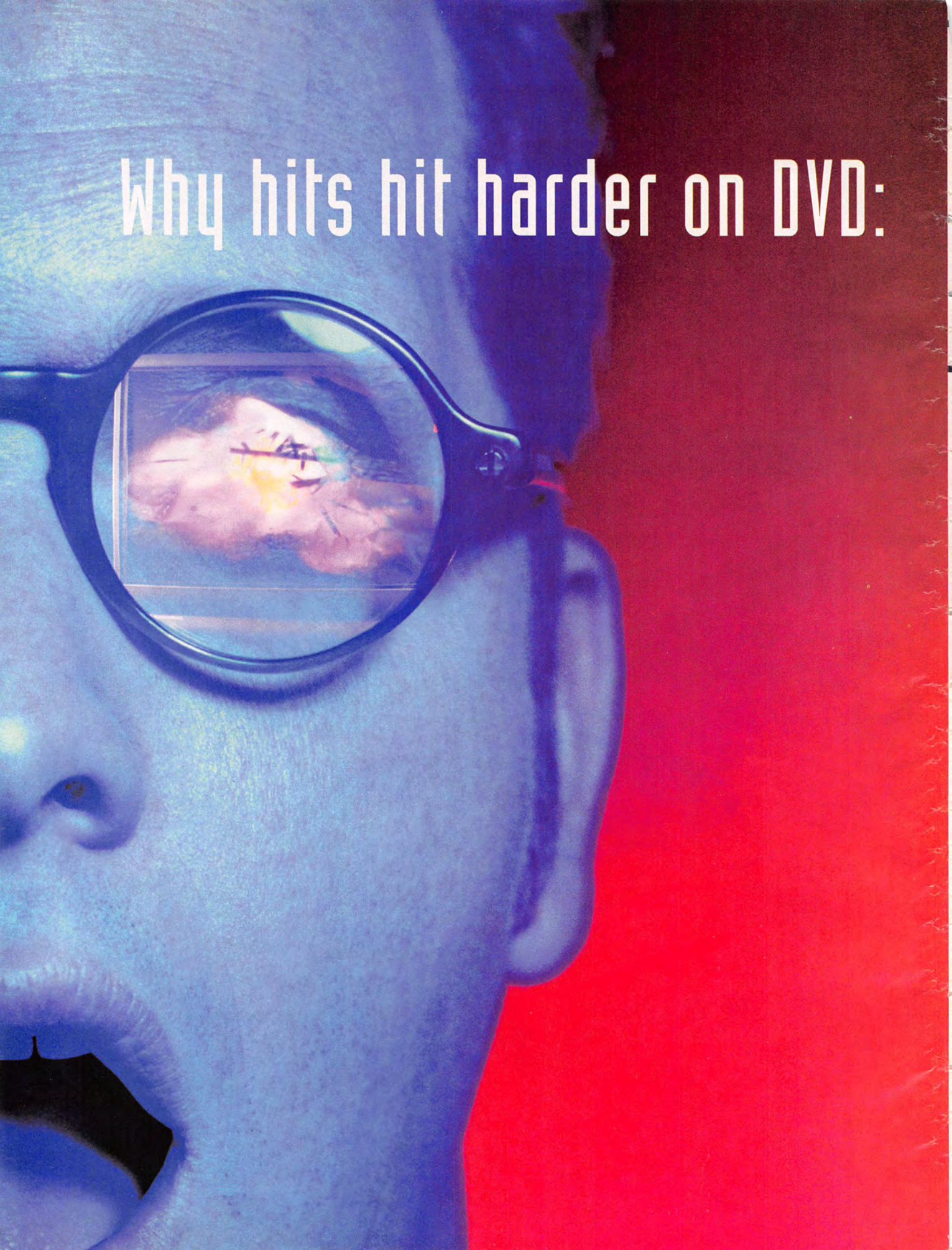
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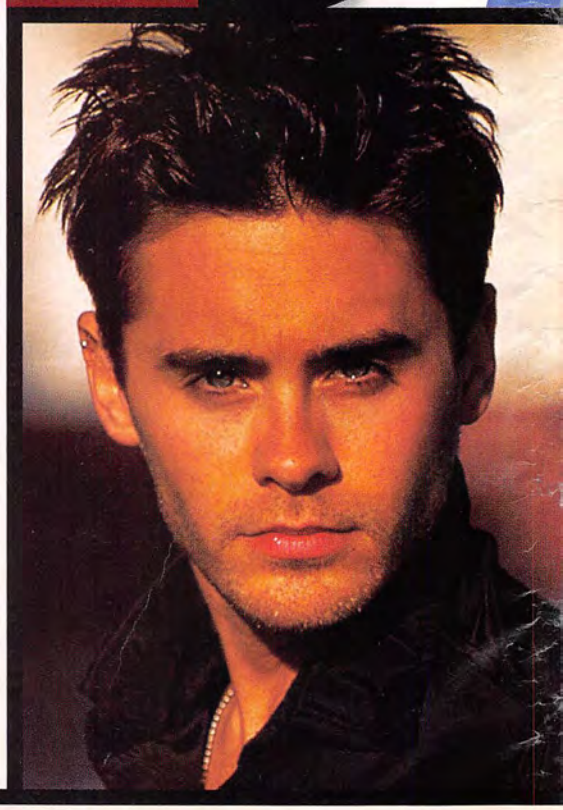
teen stars

BRANDY



JARED LETO

HANSON, KATE GARNER/VISAGES; HART, GELLAR, GREG LAVY/OUTLINE; *PARTY OF FIVE*, NORMAN JEAN ROY/OUTLINE; NEWITT, BRANDY, ERA AOSHIMA/ROTARIS GROUP; LETO, SHANNON LETO/SYGMA

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'PARTY OF FIVE'

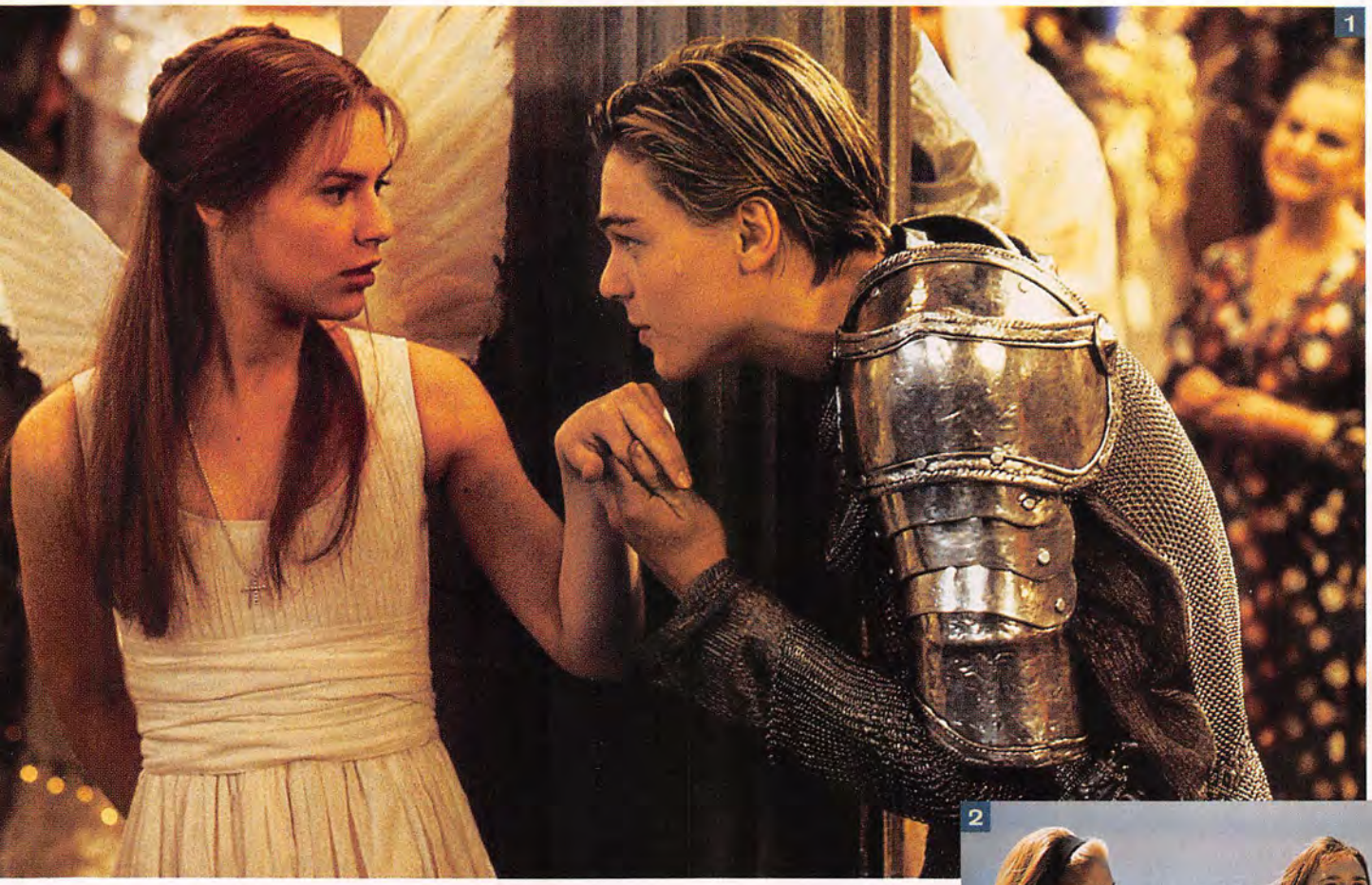
AM

Sparked by a Sexy New Brat Pack, a Youthquake Is Blowing The Lid Off Hollywood

BY CHRIS NASHAWATY

SARAH MICHELLE GELLAR

JENNIFER LOVE HEWITT



LOVE AND DEATH: (1) Danes (left) and DiCaprio helped ignite the current youth trend with *Romeo*; (2) *I Know What You Did* heroines Gellar (left) and Hewitt got kids screaming again

ROMEO & JULIET: PHOTOFEST; I KNOW WHAT YOU DID LAST SUMMER: JAMES BRIDGES/MANDALAY ENT.

HEY SAY HINDSIGHT IS 20/20. BUT LET'S be honest: How many of us can actually explain our teen celebrity obsessions, let alone own up to them? Andrew McCarthy? Lisa Whelchel? Rico *freakin'* Suave? What on earth were we thinking? It's enough to send a collective shiver down the spinal columns of all Americans over 18. ◆ Of course, it's a lot more comforting to think that these onetime luminaries had entered a Faustian bargain with the devil—that they were working some mysterious teen-idol mojo—rather than fess up to our youthful indiscretions. But what did we know? We were teenagers. And it's not like they *all* sucked. Those John Hughes films (*The Breakfast Club*, *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*, etc.) still hold up. *Happy Days* was a pretty decent show. And don't tell us you haven't occasionally cranked up Duran Duran's "Hungry Like the Wolf." ◆ It's difficult to pinpoint with any certainty when those heady days of teen steam began to sputter out, but by the end of the '80s, not only were idol pickin's pretty slim, but a certain innocence had been lost: Menudo became Nirvana, Tiffany became Courtney Love, and the Coreys (Haim and Feldman—duh!) became punchlines. The angst-ridden, pessimistic, Prozac-ready anthems of grunge washed across the land like some sort of biblical anti-bubblegum plague, lasting as long as it would take for a bubbly trio of angelic poster boys to conjure *MmmBop!* in three-part harmony.

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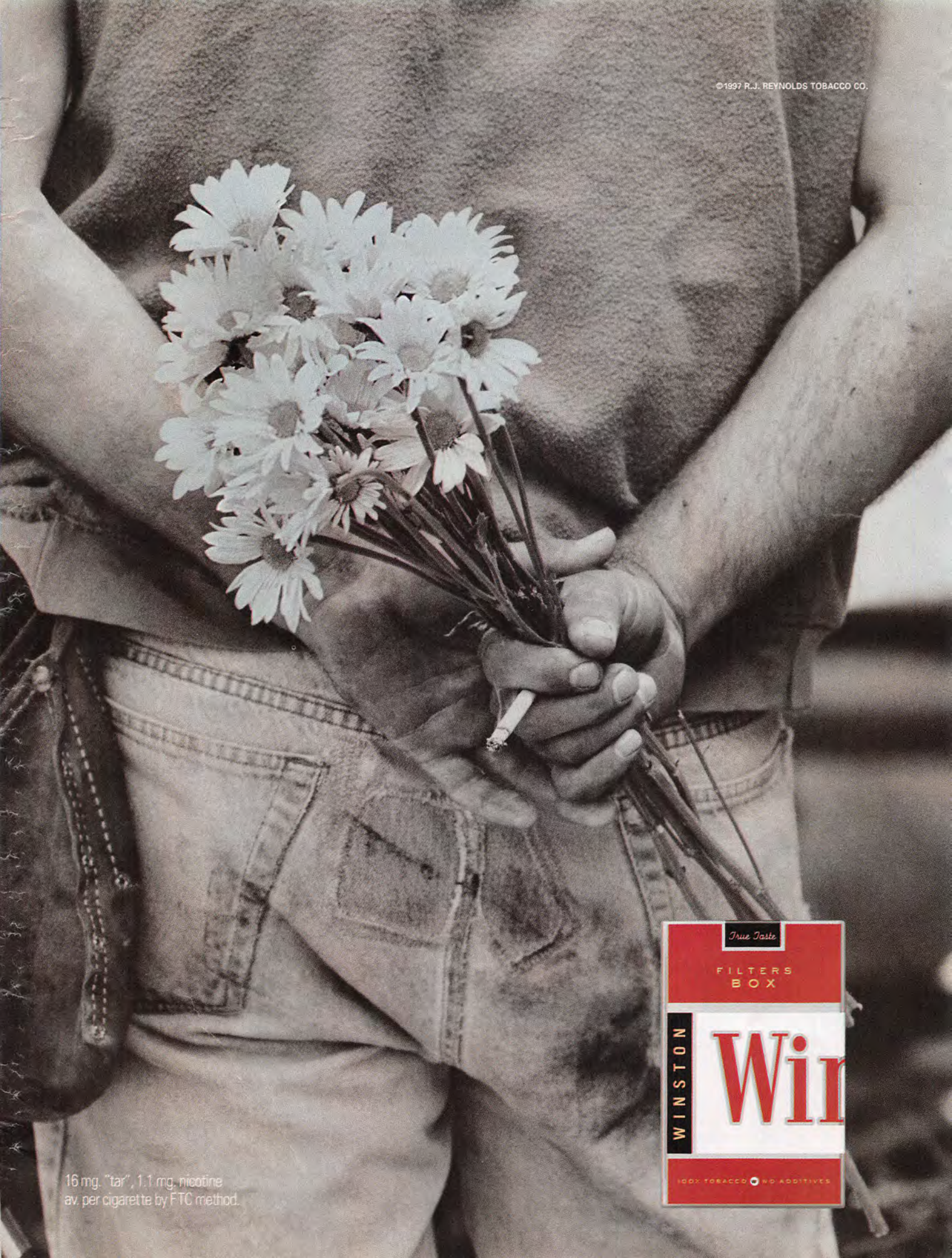
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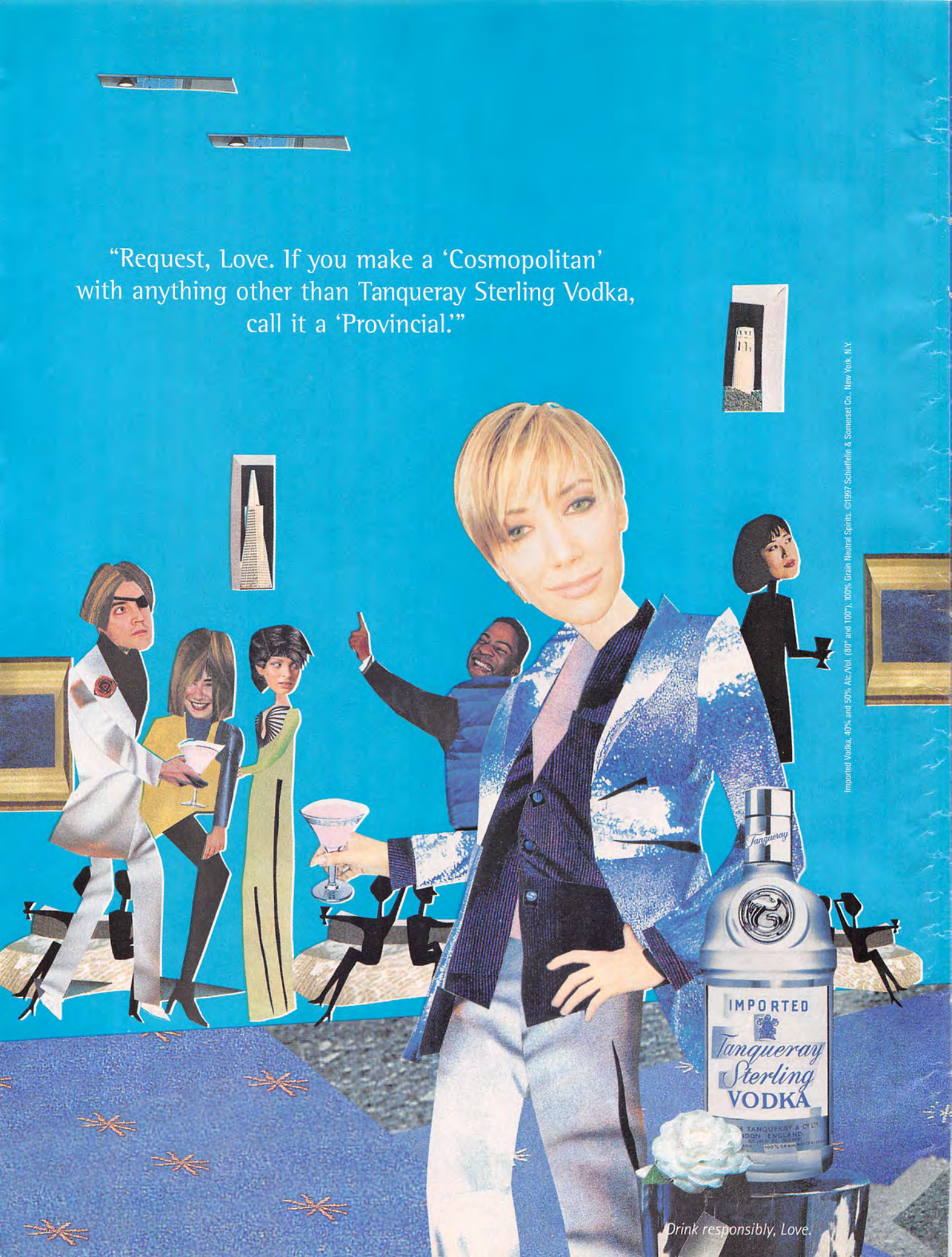
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THE GOOD NEWS FOR OUR ADOLESCENT successors is that teen-entertainment booms, like all cultural trends, are a cyclical business. Sooner or later, history will repeat itself: And, indeed, in the last few years, TV has become ground zero for a new batch of talented (and, coincidentally, *extremely* photogenic) young actors populating such youth-driven shows as *Party of Five*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Moesha*, *7th Heaven*, *Teen Angel*, and *Sabrina, the Teenage Witch*.

Music—traditionally, the first medium to fire off the rounds of any new revolution—is following suit, with 15-year-old LeAnn Rimes recently occupying the No. 1 spot on the *Billboard* 200, and such teen-friendly acts as Aqua (they of the hit "Barbie Girl"), the Spice Girls, Hanson, Fiona Apple, Backstreet Boys, and Jewel all packed into the Top 40.

Ditto at the box office, where, in the wake of *Scream*'s $103 million haul, the high school slasher flick *I Know What You Did Last Summer* is in its third week at No. 1 with a $45 million box office gross so far. (Just for comparison, the 1989 teen "hit" *Heathers* pulled in a paltry $1.1 million.) *Scream 2* opens Dec. 12, and a *Last Summer* sequel begins shooting in March.

The easy answer for this new surge is demographics. According to the Census Bureau, there are 37 million 10- to 19-year-olds right now, and that number will soar to 42 million in the next decade. (Call it *Baby Boomers: The Sequel.*) And with this population explosion comes a hungry horde of consumers itching to spend what amounts to $82 billion per year in disposable income. As added proof of teen buying power, a recent study from the Motion Picture Association of America showed that 48 percent of kids 12 to 17 say they go to a movie at least once a month, compared with just 26 percent of people 18 and over. And last year, while those teen numbers were going up, the adult numbers *decreased*.

"For so long in Hollywood it's been follow the leader," says Bob Weinstein, cochairman of Miramax, the studio behind both *Screams*. "I think *Scream* definitely showed there was an audience that was overlooked for a long time. You just have to get the right cast of young, cutting-edge stars, a soundtrack with exactly the music they want to hear, and make a good movie. It's such an easy formula, right?"

Steve Greenberg, head of A&R at Mercury Records (the label that launched Hanson), translates that formula to music: "There's a huge teen market that hasn't existed since the '70s golden age of the Jackson 5 and the Osmonds.... Fourteen labels passed on Hanson. They just didn't see the potential." The G-rated pop troika has since sold 6 million records.

Regardless of how you feel about Hanson, the product is enviously well crafted. The same can be said of *Party of Five*, or *Buffy*, or *Scream*. In fact, some of the smartest, most sophisticated—and certainly most irony-laden—writing on the big and small screens comes out of the mouths of, relatively speaking, babes. Why? Because behind the teen face of this revolution is an army of thirtysomethings wallowing in a steamy, hormonally charged gymnasium of arrested development. "High school...is what relates all my work," says Kevin Williamson, the screenwriter behind *Scream* and *I Know What You Did Last Summer*. "I'm 32, and I write for kids because I'm still a kid."

Furthermore, in respecting—even wanting to live vicariously through—their audience, Williamson and his writing and producing peers also avoid the pitfall of talking down to them. "Teenagers today have really keen bulls---detectors," says *Buffy*'s 33-year-old creator Joss Whedon. "They can smell a lie like a fart in a car." Just ask a teen: "[We] get shortchanged a lot," believes 18-year-old *Last Summer* and *Party of*

1

2

3

NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK: (1) Next up for idolhood, *Dawson's Creek* clan (clockwise from top left) Katie Holmes, Joshua Jackson, Michelle Williams, and James Van Der Beek; (2) *Dawson's* creator Williamson and his teen-flick guru, Hughes (3)

STYLING: JACKIE CADDICK; HAIR: DAN SHARP/GARREN N.Y.; MAKEUP: JOE IANNITTI/PAMELA REID. WILLIAMSON: MICHAEL HABER. HUGHES: PAUL NATKIN/OUTLINE

PHOTOGRAPH BY GERHARD YURKOVIC

Five star Jennifer Love Hewitt. "Teenagers know a lot more than what Nintendo level they're on. And our show gives them credit." Naturally, *Party of Five* also gives them Neve Campbell, Jeremy London, Scott Wolf, and Scott Wolf's dimples. C'mon, today's teenagers may be savvier and more demanding, but they *are* still flesh and blood.

THE FIRST WAVE IN THIS NEW TIDE of teen dreamboats was started by a white-haired man *way* beyond his sebum-producing years—Aaron Spelling. When *Beverly Hills, 90210* debuted on Fox in 1990, the upstart fourth net knew it didn't have a snowball's chance in hell of poaching entrenched older audiences from ABC, NBC, and CBS. So it went after teens—hard. The result? Spelling got a hit, daughter Tori got a career, and Fox got an identity.

On the other hand, the short-lived cult favorite *My So-Called Life*, which served as a televised coming-out party for Claire Danes, didn't fare as well: The 1994 teen drama was born about two years too soon, and on a network (ABC) not particularly gung ho about the demographic. After one low-rated season, ABC impatiently yanked it like a pesky baby tooth. "If *My So-Called Life* came out now it would do a lot better," says Whedon. "It definitely made it a lot easier for [Fox's] *Party of Five* to get on the air." Ironically, *Life* has since popped up in reruns on MTV to some of the network's best ratings.

Although Fox continues to attract the under-18 set (*The Simpsons* and *King of the Hill* are the No. 1 and 2 shows among all teen boys), the net is now more interested in growing up with its viewers. But Fox's early strategy wasn't lost on feisty upstarts UPN (home to *Clueless* and Brandy Norwood's smart, sassy *Moesha*) and The WB, the net with the youngest average viewers. "We're *happy* to cater to teens," says Susanne Daniels, executive VP of programming at The WB. "We don't want to do shows like *Roseanne*; we want to do *Roseanne* from Darlene's point of view."

One bright prospect that Daniels hopes will allow The WB to pull ahead of the pack is *Dawson's Creek*, a drama series on tap from *Scream* scribe Williamson, who describes the show as "*My So-Called Life* with a dark twist." Of course, the irony is that very description would've gotten the show the bum's rush a few years ago. Now it's a selling point.

IT WAS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME before the movie studios made note of all the *Tiger Beat*-friendly faces crowding the small screen. It's a tradition, of course, that goes right back to John "Ba-Ba-Barbarino" Travolta on *Welcome Back, Kotter*, but the TV-to-movie transition is suddenly bigger than ever. Current crossovers include Danes, Hewitt, Sarah Michelle Gellar (*Buffy*), Jared Leto (*My So-Called Life*), *PO5*'s Campbell, Wolf, and London, and Leonardo DiCaprio. That's right: Before his 1994 Oscar nomination, DiCaprio was a precocious pretty boy on the Kirk Cameron sitcom *Growing Pains*. Now he's a genuine teen matinee idol thanks to last year's MTV-inspired *Romeo & Juliet*, costarring Danes. Some believe that film's unexpected success—driven largely by swarms of swooning teenage girls—kicked off Hollywood's current love affair with the just-postpuberty set. Well, that and a little 1995 Alicia Silverstone movie called *Clueless*, which raked in $57 million.

Needless to say, TV popularity and dreamy good looks aren't a surefire

The Junior League

What's that old saying: The more things change, the more they stay the same? What a frightening thought. After consulting our decade-by-decade teen conversion chart, we think you'll agree.

CATEGORY	'70S	'80S	'90S
HEARTTHROB BOY BAND	Bay City Rollers	Duran Duran	Backstreet Boys
LONG-HAIRED CHANTEUSE	Melanie	Tiffany	Alanis Morissette
POSTER GIRL	Farrah Fawcett	Heather Thomas	Pamela Anderson Lee
POSTER BOY	Leif Garrett	John Stamos	Joey Lawrence
HUNKY BROTHERS	The Cassidys (Shaun & David)	The Astins (Sean & Mackenzie)	Hanson
CULT SLASHER MOVIE	*Halloween*	*A Nightmare on Elm Street*	*Scream*
TV LAUNCHING PAD	*Welcome Back, Kotter* (John Travolta)	*21 Jump Street* (Johnny Depp)	*Growing Pains* (Leonardo DiCaprio)
BROODING STUD	Willie Aames (*Eight Is Enough*)	River Phoenix	Jared Leto
BAD GIRL	Suzi Quatro (*Happy Days*' Leather Tuscadero)	Madonna	Courtney Love
MISS POPULARITY (PICTURED ABOVE)	Maureen McCormick (Marcia! Marcia! Marcia!)	Molly Ringwald	Alicia Silverstone
ALMOST PAINFULLY COOL	Clarence Williams III (*The Mod Squad*)	Judd Nelson (*only* in *The Breakfast Club*)	Fiona Apple
STONER DUDES	Timothy Van Patten (*The White Shadow*'s Salami)	Sean "Spicoli" Penn (*Fast Times at Ridgemont High*)	Rory Cochrane (*Dazed and Confused*)
WISECRACKIN' SIDEKICK	Ralph Malph (*Happy Days*)	Jon "Duckie" Cryer (*Pretty In Pink*)	Nicholas Brendon (*Buffy the Vampire Slayer*)
CLIQUE FLICK	*Grease*	*The Breakfast Club*	*Clueless*
DECADE PUNCHLINE	Danny Bonaduce	The Coreys (Haim & Feldman)	Urkel
MARTYR	Life cereal's Mikey	Andy Gibb	Kurt Cobain
PERENNIAL TEEN WANNABE	Dick Clark	Dick Clark	Dick Clark

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guarantee of box office bankability. Jonathan Taylor Thomas—a star of ABC's *Home Improvement*, one of the most popular shows among teens—got a pretty humbling spanking earlier this year with the adventure film *Wild America*. But isolated casualties aside, the enormous success of the new breed of teen stalker flicks seems to be ushering in a revival of the '80s *Breakfast Club*-era ensemble movies and a sort of neo–Brat Pack along with it.

Hewitt, for one, thinks the comparison is "a huge compliment.... If I'm a member of a brat pack with Claire Danes, Sarah Michelle Gellar, and Alicia Silverstone, that isn't a bad pack to be in." And Williamson, the rebounding teen genre's biggest booster, eagerly cops to wanting to "bring back the whole John Hughes thing. The teen comedy has been gone for way too long." In fact, Williamson says he's had discussions with Hughes' production company about making a high school feature.

If the clique flicks continue to multiply, then the odds-on favorite to become the next Molly Ringwald is Hewitt, who, in addition to the sequel to *I Know What You Did Last Summer*, just started shooting *The Party*, a romantic high school graduation comedy, for Columbia. Then, of course, there's the upcoming movie from one of the biggest packs of brats of all, the Spice Girls, whose *Spice World* hits theaters Jan. 23. Which is not to be confused with the in-the-works Hanson biopic.

Those boys had better step on it. After all, what happens when "keyboardin' cutie" Taylor's voice pulls a Peter Brady and drops a few octaves? Um, well, actually, that bit of teen apocalypse is already upon us, according to their A&R man, Greenberg. "We were hoping we wouldn't have a Donny Osmond problem, where as a kid his voice was great, but it wasn't so great as an adult. But on the new Christmas album, Taylor sounds like a young Otis Redding."

Egad! We can almost hear the optimistic refrain from the swelling teen nation: "Otis Redding? Is he one of the Backstreet Boys?" ■

And The TEEN BEAT Goes On

NAME / AGE	WEB SITES	TEEN CRED	BRAT PACK EQUIVALENT
Brandy / 18	4	*Seventeen* cover (April '95)	Demi Moore
Neve Campbell / 24	11	*Sassy* cover (June '96)	Demi Moore + Ally Sheedy
Scott Wolf / 29	3	*Seventeen* cover (May '95)	Rob Lowe + Emilio Estevez – Ralph Macchio
Jennifer Love Hewitt / 18	6	*Seventeen* cover (Feb. '97); tentative *Teen People* cover (Feb. '98)	Molly Ringwald + Ally Sheedy
Jeremy London / 25	2	*Twist* cover (Oct./Nov. '97); *Seventeen* cover (Feb. '96)	Andrew McCarthy – Judd Nelson
Sarah Michelle Gellar / 20	11	*YM* cover (Dec. '97)	Demi Moore + Emilio Estevez
David Boreanaz / 26	1	Look for covers next spring	Andrew McCarthy + Rob Lowe – Judd Nelson
Nicholas Brendon / 26	3	Featured in *Twist*, *Teen*, *YM*, and *Seventeen*	Robert Downey Jr. x Jon Cryer ÷ Judd Nelson
Melissa Joan Hart / 21	10	*Seventeen* cover (Fall '97 Special Issue)	Ally Sheedy + Jon Cryer ÷ Emilio Estevez
Jared Leto / 25	5	*Seventeen* cover (July '96)	Andrew McCarthy + Rob Lowe + Judd Nelson ÷ Anthony Michael Hall
Mike Damus / 18	3	Featured in *Teen*, *Tiger Beat*, and *Seventeen*	Ralph Macchio + Rob Lowe ÷ Jon Cryer
Heather Matarazzo / 15	1	Featured in *The New York Times Magazine*	Ally Sheedy ÷ Anthony Michael Hall
Reese Witherspoon / 21	2	*Seventeen* cover (Sept. '97)	Demi Moore + Molly Ringwald
Freddie Prinze Jr. / 21	2	Featured in *Sassy* and *Seventeen*	Emilio Estevez + Andrew McCarthy
Ryan Phillippe / 22	0	Prefers to avoid teen publications	Anthony Michael Hall + Judd Nelson ÷ Molly Ringwald

NOT SINCE THE DAYS of Molly Ringwald and Rob Lowe has the teen-idol frontier been so, well, fertile. "There are more teenagers in this country than ever before," explains *Seventeen* executive editor Roberta Caploe. "They're all going to the movies and watching TV, so it's no surprise a teen roster of stars is developing." For anyone whose definition of a teen hunk stalled with Keanu Reeves, may we present our at-a-glance primer for the next generation. *—Jessica Shaw, with additional reporting by Shawna Malcom*

HOW YOU KNOW HIM/HER	ON BEING AN IDOL
She's a four-time Grammy nominee, the star of UPN's *Moesha*, and the highest-rated TV Cinderella of all time (*The Wonderful World of Disney*'s recent broadcast grabbed 34 million viewers).	"The hardest part has been maintaining a small head—remaining down-to-earth. So many people try to make you more than you are."
The pensive yet headstrong Julia Salinger of Fox's *Party of Five* has also become a Jamie Lee Curtis for the '90s, thanks to *Scream* and the upcoming *Scream 2*. Before Hollywood, she danced with the National Ballet of Canada.	It's tough: "I don't want to put up barriers, but I find myself in circumstances where some people try to be your friend because of who you are, instead of who you are inside."
After three years as Bailey Salinger on *Party of Five*, he's no longer just the guy who looks a hell of a lot like Tom Cruise. So far, however, film stardom has eluded him (his feature debut was in the 1993 cult film *Teenage Bonnie and Klepto Clyde*; last year's *White Squall* tanked).	"If I didn't play younger characters, I wouldn't be working."
She's got that strong yet vulnerable thing going on in *Party of Five* (as Sarah Reeves) and in the star-making *I Know What You Did Last Summer*. Hewitt also joins the ranks of Alyssa Milano in being a singer who is "popular in Japan."	"I think of myself as a working actor, not a teen idol or a big star. But if I'm trapped in teen roles, it's the best possible trap in the world. I have the best life."
As supersensitive Griffin on *Party of Five*, he's *My So-Called Life*'s Jordan Catalano, minus the stupidity, but with a cool motorcycle. He also had the distinct honor of playing a lovelorn teen in the Shannen Doherty debacle *Mallrats*.	Dubbed "Luscious London" by *Teen*, he's grateful he's not just a female heartthrob. "A lot of guys identify with Griffin. They don't want to admit it, but they like *Party of Five* too."
The former soap star (*All My Children*) now rules The WB as Buffy the Vampire Slayer; she *can* do fragile, though, as proved on the big screen with *I Know What You Did Last Summer*. Next up: *Scream 2* with Neve Campbell.	"This is what I've waited for my whole life."
He's Angel, Buffy's steamy undead beau (the one she wants to sink *her* teeth into). Prior to that, he did several beer spots, including one directed by David Fincher (*The Game*); it never aired, according to Boreanaz, because "it was too dark."	"It's trippy because every time I go somewhere it's like, 'Is this guy going to be a vampire or not?' I'm like, 'Just relax. My fangs are reserved for other people.'" Uh, what was the question?
He's Xander Harris, adorable, smart-ass sidekick to Buffy. Before battling vampires, he had a bit part on *Dave's World* (after being fired as the show's production assistant).	"I feel lucky because if this were 10 years ago, this wouldn't be happening. Then again, I'd love to be able to grow facial hair and do a film."
After three years as Clarissa, the Nickelodeon set's heroine, she now casts weekly spells for ABC in its TGIF hit *Sabrina, the Teenage Witch*. Prior to both those gigs, she served as the 4-year-old spokesbaby for Splashy, a bathtub doll.	"It's flattering and a big responsibility. Even though I'm over 21, I feel I can't drink [alcohol in public] sometimes. But that's part of my job."
From the first moment his character, soulful Jordan Catalano, leaned against a locker in *My So-Called Life*, he stole the heart of Claire Danes and nearly every young female across the country. Leto's currently concentrating on film, without much success: He wiped out in *Prefontaine*; *SwitchBack* is struggling.	"I don't really partake in any of that [teen idoldom]. The teen mags do what they want to do."
He's Marty, the wing-sporting high schooler on ABC's breakout hit *Teen Angel*; also understudied in the 1992 Broadway production of *Lost in Yonkers*.	"Works for me!"
She personified adolescent angst in the Sundance gem *Welcome to the Dollhouse*, played Natasha on Nickelodeon's *The Adventures of Pete & Pete*, pops up in *The Devil's Advocate*, and will next appear in *54*. Prior to *Dollhouse*, she played Helen Keller in a Rochester, N.Y., production of *The Miracle Worker*.	"Some of the people I've never been friends with are starting to hang out with me now and they're, like, asking me for money and stuff. It's, like, I don't even have any!"
Thanks to her heartrending crush-on-the-boy-next-door performance in 1991's *The Man in the Moon*, she's become a staple topic at high school slumber parties. Although she hasn't hit big with anything recently, she'll next star in MTV Films' *Election* opposite Matthew Broderick.	"I'm *huge* with parking-lot attendants. *Huge*!"
The son of deceased *Chico and the Man* star Freddie Prinze is one of the teens being chased by a hook-handed fisherdude in *I Know What You Did Last Summer*. He also had a four-line role on *Family Matters*, where he picked up a few career-longevity tips from Jaleel White.	No comment
Phillippe was part of *White Squall*'s buff ensemble cast (along with fellow heartthrob Scott Wolf), but he really connected with audiences in *I Know What You Did Last Summer*.	No comment

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BY GREGG KILDAY

This year, when Hollywood talks about its legends of the fall, it won't be talking about Brad Pitt, Al Pacino, Michael Douglas, or Keanu Reeves. In a season of unpredictable upsets, a bunch of upstarts like Jennifer Love Hewitt, Vanessa L. Williams, and Robert Carlyle amazed the movie industry by upstaging A-list stars. As formula packages—especially high-concept thrillers with glossy leading men—fell by the wayside or failed to earn back their costs,

THE FALL BOX OFFICE REPORT CARD: 'SOUL FOOD' WAS DELICIOUS, BRAD PITT WENT NOWHERE, AND 'THE FULL MONTY' WENT ALL THE WAY

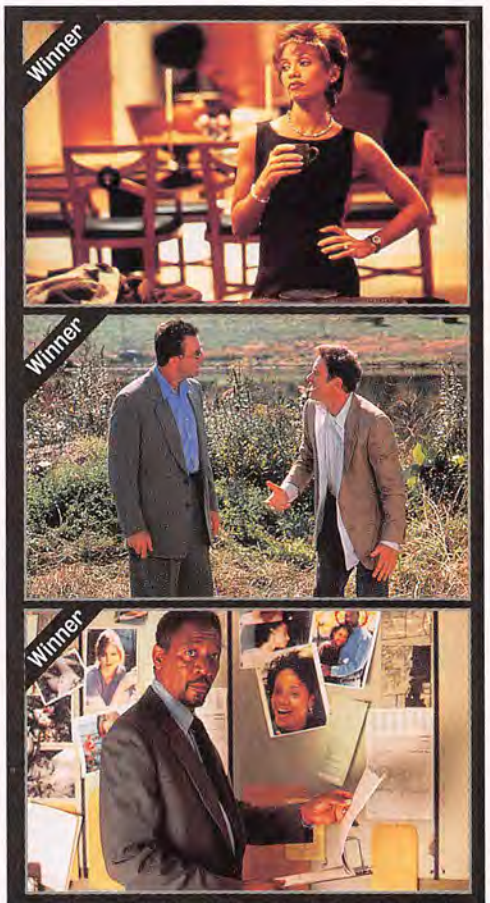
ILLUSTRATION BY MR. FOTHERINGHAM

some genuinely quirky movies emerged from the pack. This fall, the rules of the game were:

Thrillers Failed to Thrill

After a summer of big, less-than-awe-inspiring box office behemoths that sucked in audiences and then spit them out (everyone saw *The Lost World: Jurassic Park*, but did anybody talk about it afterward?), moviegoers were clearly hungry for something different. Overall, the post–Labor Day box office was up 12 percent over last year, as filmgoers dutifully sampled each new entry in turn. Michael Douglas' puzzle-box thriller, *The Game*, bowed at $14.3 million, allowing PolyGram's new distribution arm to boast that it could open a mainstream movie. Two weeks later, Steven Spielberg, Jeffrey Katzenberg, and David Geffen got DreamWorks SKG off to a running start with its first feature, *The Peacemaker*, which starred George Clooney and Nicole Kidman and came in at a respectable $12.3 million. Three weeks after that, *The Devil's Advocate*, starring Keanu Reeves and Al Pacino as Satan in a lawyer's suit, materialized at $12.2 million.

But the encouraging debuts proved misleading. *The Game* left some audiences feeling cheated and quickly dropped from the top of the charts. *The Peacemaker* will depend heavily on foreign, cable, and video revenues to turn a profit. By the time *Devil's Advocate* began to burn off, it was clear audiences had overdosed on thrillers. Only the serial-killer tale *Kiss the Girls* had real staying power—thanks in large part to the presence of its star. "Without question, Morgan Freeman brought a credibility to the movie," says Paramount film vice chairman Rob Friedman.



FALL STALWARTS: Williams in *Soul Food*, Selleck and Kline in *In & Out*, Freeman in *Kiss the Girls*

Comedies Brought Relief

While Douglas and Reeves were being tortured on screen, moviegoers went for the laugh. Though 1996's *The Birdcage* proved that mainstream moviegoers were ready for gay comedies, *In & Out* went a step further, allowing all-American Tom Selleck to plant a big smackeroo on the lips of sexually confused Kevin Kline. And even as special-interest groups on the left and right acrimoniously debated TV's newly liberated *Ellen*, *In & Out* rose to the top of the box office charts without any backlash. Securely positioned in the same fall slot where *The First Wives Club* hit big last year, it underscored the audience's appetite for solid comedies.

Sexual role reversals also contributed to the novelty of *The Full Monty*, the British import starring Robert Carlyle (*Trainspotting*), about unemployed factory workers–turned–unlikely male strippers. Launched Aug. 13 on just six screens, it quickly jumped from art-house hit to word-of-mouth phenomenon, inspiring stripper contests and even an episode of *The Drew Carey Show*. Produced at a cost of just $3 million, it's proving itself the biggest little hit of the season as it bumps and grinds to a potential domestic gross of $40 million—and more if Fox Searchlight's planned Oscar campaign pays off.

Life Was Good Outside the Hood

If Hollywood underappreciated the demand for comedies, it also failed to heed the lesson taught so clearly by the 1995 hit *Waiting to Exhale*, which demonstrated there is a sizable black audience that will pay dearly to see their life stories on screen. "Movies about African Americans that don't have violence can do $40–50 million, even if they don't cross over to the white audience," explains Twentieth Century Fox film senior executive VP Tom Sherak. And that's exactly what happened with *Soul Food*, starring Vanessa L. Williams, Vivica A. Fox, and Irma P. Hall as a family in emotional and financial turmoil. By contrast, some seemingly dependable black action movies failed to deliver: *Hoodlum*, the period gangster movie starring Laurence Fishburne, will do approximately half the business that *Soul Food* will, while *Gang Related*, starring the late Tupac Shakur, and *Most Wanted* barely made it out of the gate.

Paying Movie Stars Didn't Pay

Douglas, Pacino, and Clooney were ultimately ignored, and not even Brad Pitt could persuade moviegoers to spend *Seven Years in Tibet*. (In the wake of *Devil's Own*'s tepid returns last spring, Pitt would be wise to stop with the accents and give the masses a crowd-pleaser.) Meanwhile, up popped the teen-slasher movie *I Know What You Did Last Summer*, the only fall title so far to top the box office charts for three weeks running. So what if it starred TV actresses Jennifer Love Hewitt (*Party of Five*) and Sarah Michelle Gellar (*Buffy the Vampire Slayer*)? To *Last Summer*'s target teenage au-

SOUL FOOD: CHUCK HODES/© 'IN & OUT': ANDY SCHWARTZ; KISS THE GIRLS: BOB GREENE

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CAMEL LIGHTS
What you're looking for.

dience, they *are* major stars (see cover story on page 24). Columbia's ads saying it came "from the creator of *Scream*" (screenwriter Kevin Williamson) were pulled after Miramax screamed in protest, but the campaign obviously worked while it lasted.

With the audience splintering into special-interest groups—teens going to *Summer*, African Americans to *Soul Food*—niche stars like Hewitt and Williams ruled. (The success of such non-star vehicles, in fact, bodes well for *Starship Troopers*—big bugs, small stars—and the overseas blockbuster *Bean*, a British comedy that cost just $17 million and has already taken in more than $120 million.)

FALLING DOWN: Pitt in *Tibet*, Angelina Jolie and David Duchovny in *Playing God*, Ewan McGregor and Cameron Diaz in *A Life Less Ordinary*

Indies Short-Circuited

While year-end critics' awards and possible Oscar nominations could extend their shelf lives, two big-studio critical darlings, *L.A. Confidential* and *Boogie Nights*, haven't yet lived up to their rave reviews at the box office. Still, audiences in major cities have turned out for those films (as well as *The Full Monty*), which drowned out the indie art-house dwellers clamoring for attention. Neither *The House of Yes* nor *The Myth of Fingerprints*, both Sundance Film Festival favorites, has garnered mass approval. Critical successes like *The Sweet Hereafter* and the documentary *Fast, Cheap & Out of Control* have yet to expand beyond limited engagements.

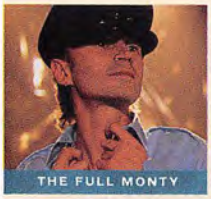
What Does It All Mean?

Let's just say that based on the fall's returns, here's the perfect pitch: Morgan Freeman and Tom Selleck—as two hilarious gay strippers—eat tainted pot roast prepared by Irma P. Hall and begin stalking the cast of *Party of Five*. Have Kevin Williamson write it, and say it's from the creator of *Scream* until Miramax threatens a lawsuit. Oh, and get Brad Pitt—to produce. ■

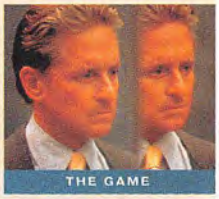
BOX OFFICE RETURNS

The Fall Money

A User-Friendly Guide to What Won, What Lost, and What's Happening


THE FULL MONTY

U-TURN


THE GAME

WINNERS	BUDGETS*	EST. FINAL GROSS*
1. In & Out	$35	$67.5
2. Last Summer	$17	$65–70
3. Kiss the Girls	$30	$61–62
4. Soul Food	$7	$48
5. The Full Monty	$3	$35–40

MORE TROUBLE THAN THEY'RE WORTH		
1. The Game	$70	$50
2. The Devil's Advocate	$60	$45–50
3. The Peacemaker	$50	$43
4. L.A. Confidential	$40	$35–40

LOSERS & LIGHTWEIGHTS		
1. Seven Years in Tibet	$70	$35–40
2. The Edge	$19	$27
3. Hoodlum	$30	$25
4. Fire Down Below	$45	$16.5
5. RocketMan	$9	$16
6. Wishmaster	$6.5	$16
7. FairyTale	$10	$10–12
8. Gattaca	$20	$10–12
9. A Thousand Acres	$28	$8
10. U-Turn	$15	$8
11. Most Wanted	$25	$6.5
12. Gang Related	$8	$6
13. A Life Less Ordinary	$12	$5–6
14. Playing God	$15	$5

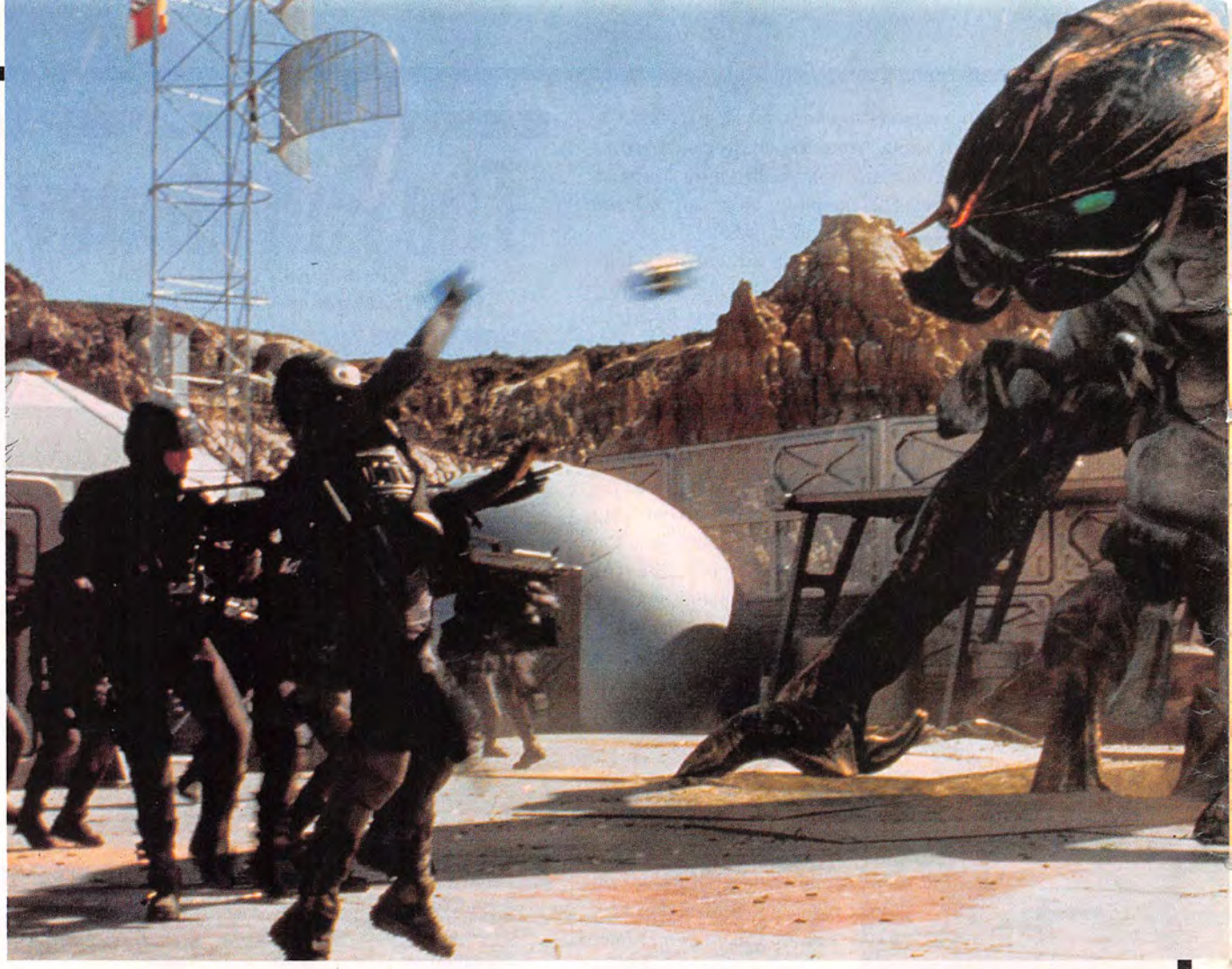
GOOD STARTS		
1. Boogie Nights	$15	8.7**
2. The Ice Storm	$15	1.7**

ART-HOUSE FILMS THAT HAVE YET TO BREAK $1 MILLION

Fast, Cheap & Out of Control, The End of Violence, Going All the Way, Gummo, The House of Yes, Intimate Relations, Lilies, The Myth of Fingerprints, The Sweet Hereafter, Washington Square, Telling Lies in America, Year of the Horse, The Wind in the Willows

*IN MILLIONS **GROSS TO DATE (SOURCE: EXHIBITOR RELATIONS CO.) SOME BUDGETS ESTIMATED

SEVEN YEARS IN TIBET: DAVID ASPELEY; PLAYING GOD: MARSHA BLACKBURN; A LIFE LESS ORDINARY: DARREN MICHAELS; THE FULL MONTY: TOM HILTON; U-TURN: ZADE ROSENTHAL; THE GAME: TONY FRIEDKIN

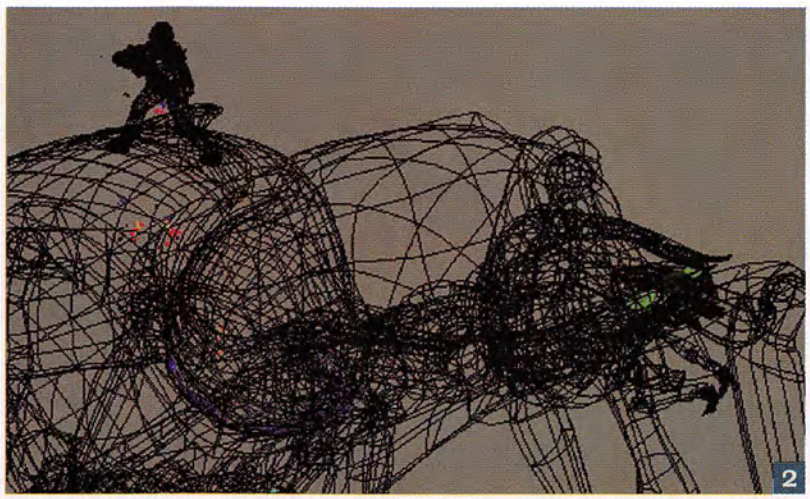


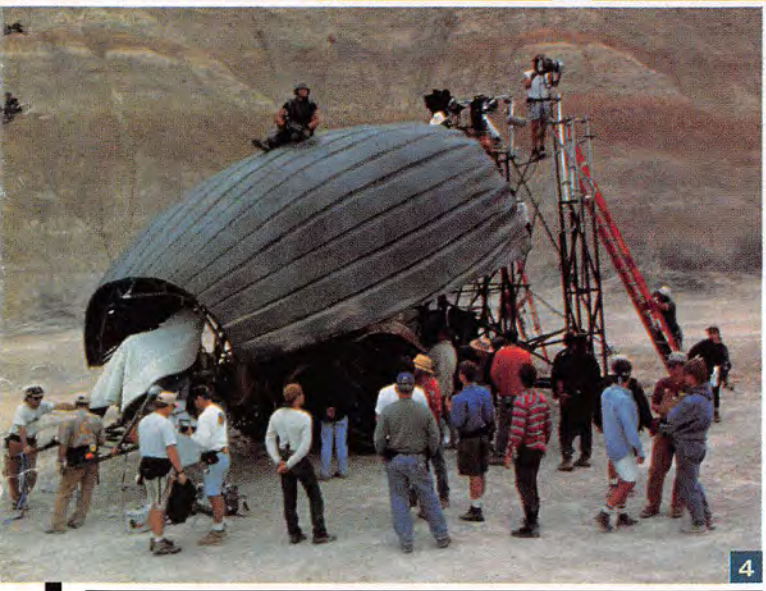
QUIT BUGGIN' ME

IN STARSHIP TROOPERS, THE DIRECTOR OF 'TOTAL RECALL' CREATES SOME MEMORABLE ARACHNIDS. HERE'S HOW THE CRABBY CRITTERS CAME TO LIFE.

BY CHRIS NASHAWATY

TRISTAR STUDIOS

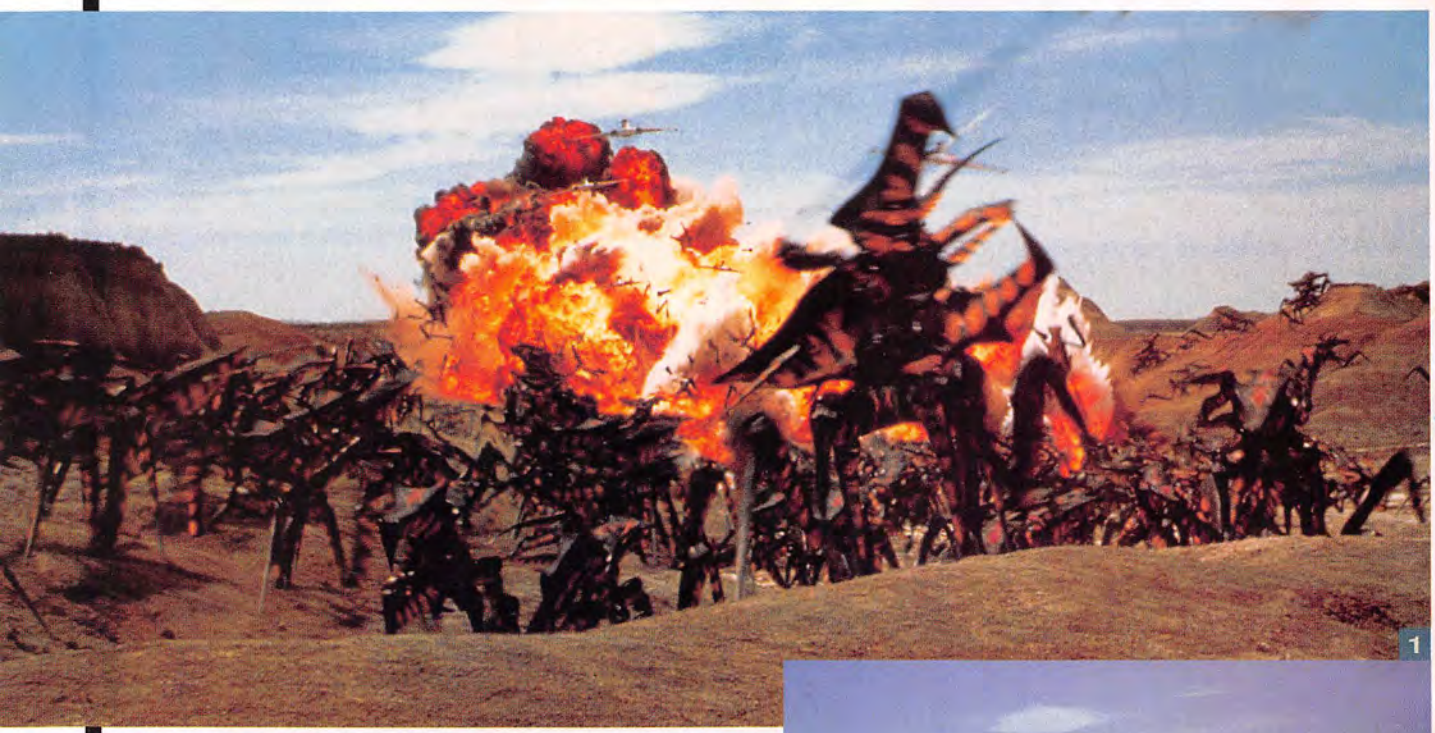


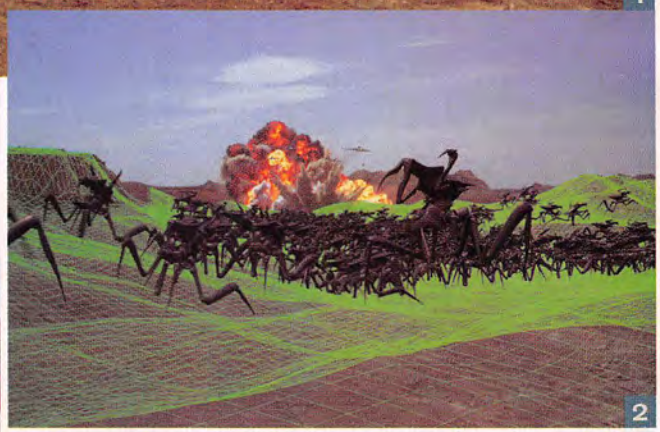


STARSHIP'S ENTERPRISE: Soldiers pretend to battle a Tanker Bug—added later by computer (1); Tippett mapped digital versions of Van Dien and the angry arachnid that takes him for a ride (2, 3); for a close-up of that scene, a bug model that was mounted on a tractor bucked a harnessed Van Dien (4)

4: STEPHEN VAUGHAN

MAYBE IT'S because Paul Verhoeven is Dutch and his grasp of the subtleties of English is still shaky. Then again, maybe the guy's just completely nuts. Either way, he doesn't seem to have a clue what "big" means. ◆ Case in point: When asked why he tackled the $100 million killer-insects-in-space carnage-fest *Starship Troopers*, Verhoeven deadpans, "I always wanted to make a big movie." When in recent memory has Paul Verhoeven *not* made a big movie? *RoboCop*, *Total Recall*, and *Basic Instinct* weren't exactly whimsical little art-house bonbons. Heck, even when Verhoeven makes a bomb like *Showgirls*, it's a *big* bomb. ◆ Big also describes the reservations the 58-year-old director had when he first heard the *Starship Troopers* pitch three years ago ("kids going off and fighting giant bugs in outer space"). "I had to





BYTE MARKS: In a climactic battle, the explosions are real, but the warrior bugs are computer-generated and the planes are models (1); in the blueprint for the clash, the lines guide the insects' swarming movements (2); Van Dien flees from a computer-generated beastie; while shooting the scene, he was chased by two crew members holding poles (3)

laugh because it sounded so silly," he says in a thick Holland-aise accent.

What helped win Verhoeven over was the involvement of Oscar-winning F/X guru Phil Tippett (*The Empire Strikes Back*, *RoboCop*, *Jurassic Park*). The pair hashed out the blueprints for the film's razor-taloned, plasma-spewing intergalactic beasties. With 550 digital shots in *Troopers*, Tippett only half jokingly refers to his *Jurassic* raptors as a piece of cake by comparison. "At least with the dinosaurs we had something real to base them on," he says. "This was almost like creating an animated feature." In fact, *Troopers* is so heavy on envelope-pushing gee-whiz eye candy that Verhoeven was left with only half of his $100 million budget for everything else. Which explains *Troopers*' cast of inexpensive pretty-girl and even-prettier-boy actors like Dina Meyer, Casper Van Dien, and Neil Patrick Harris.

"To be honest, we didn't have any money left for stars," says Verhoeven, who did briefly consider adding Leonardo DiCaprio or Chris O'Donnell to his battalion of square-jawed, largely Aaron Spelling-trained commandos.

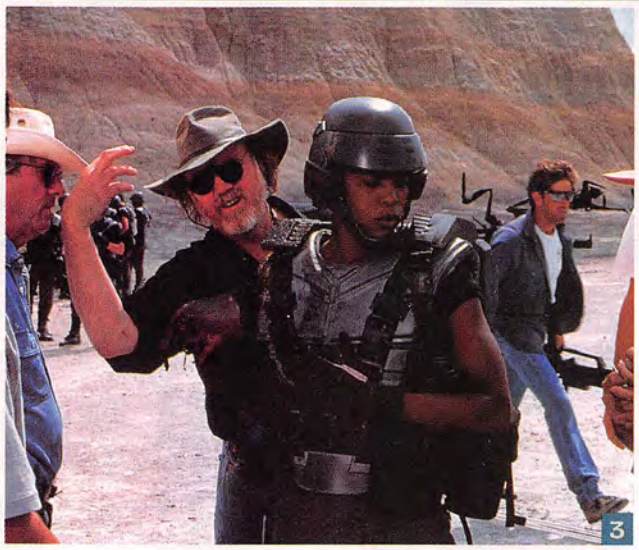
If the cast members seem somewhat expendable, that's because they *are* in *Starship Troopers*, which boasts an alarmingly high body count. So high, in fact, that after Verhoeven completed his 120-day shoot in the sweltering badlands of Wyoming, he prepared himself for a tussle with the MPAA ratings board. "I was surprised," says Verhoeven, laughing. "They only made me cut a few seconds of a decapitation. They actually thought for once in my life I'd restrained myself." ■

1, 2, 3: TRISTAR STUDIOS

NO GUTS, NO GORY: With Wyoming's scenery in the background, crew members fire a concoction of vegetables and orange coloring designed to look like pulpy bug guts (1); Dina Meyer gets impaled by a razor-sharp bug claw (2); actress Ungela Brockman, with Verhoeven (far left) and Tippett, doesn't look like a happy *Trooper* (3)—perhaps because the cast had to endure a two-week boot camp with an ex–Marine drill sergeant. Says the director, "I think they had a really horrible time." Verhoeven tiptoes through the carnage toward a 10- by 20-foot model of a warrior bug (4).

1

2



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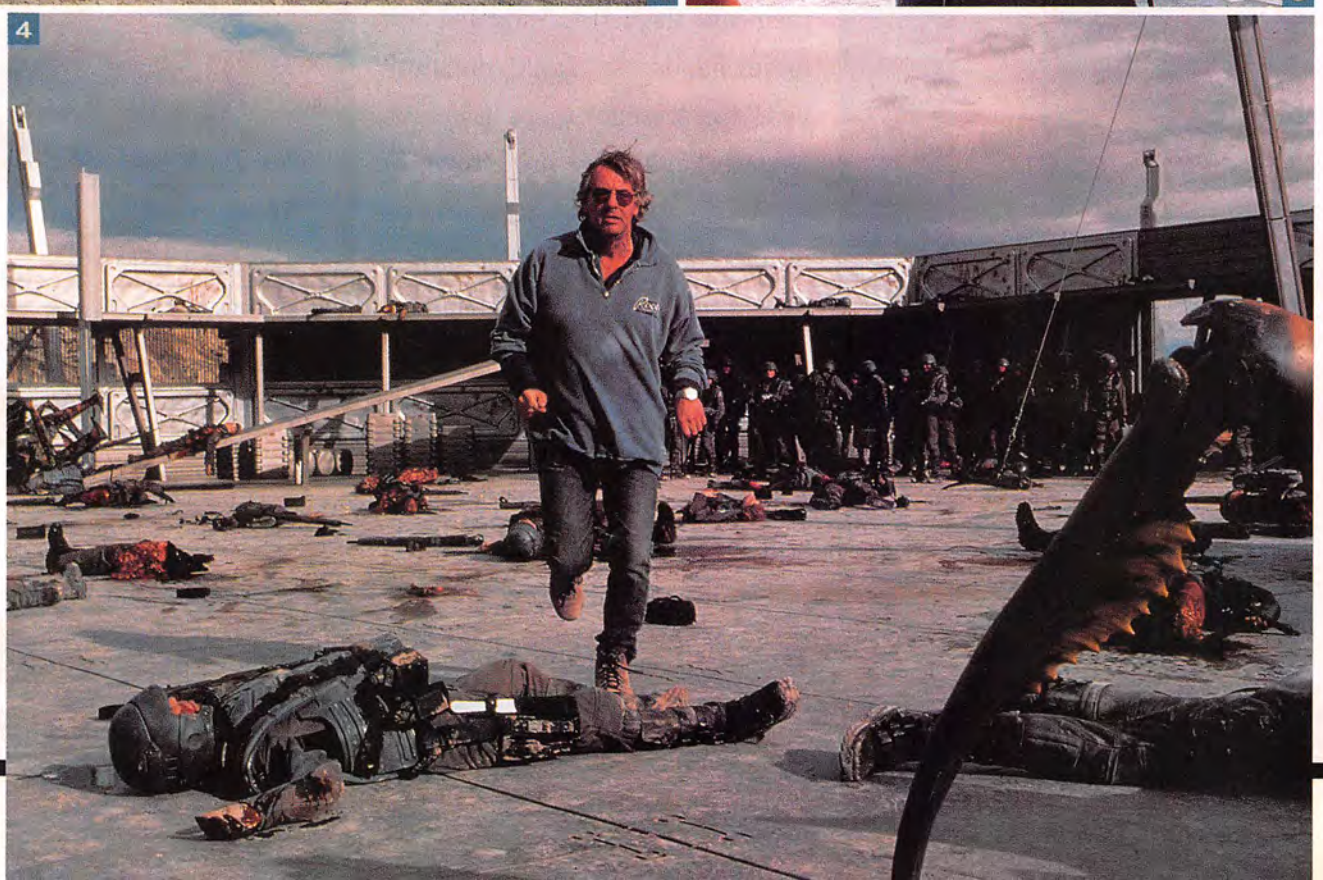


4

1, 2, 3, 4: STEPHEN VAUGHAN

INSTANT DHARMA

BY DAN SNIERSON

JENNA ELFMAN is lounging in a lawn chair, quietly soaking up the mellow darkness outside stage 21 at Twentieth Century Fox studios, having slipped away from the filming of her ABC sitcom *Dharma & Greg*. Suddenly, her reverie is broken by an elderly woman who approaches Elfman, then cups the actress' startled face in her hands. ◆ "Tank you...tank you," the stranger rasps in broken English. "Your show bring *so much* joy to me...so much joy...[cheek pinch]...such a *vonderful* child...[forehead kiss]...so sveet...[chin caress]...alvays tink of me." ◆ Overwhelmed by the shower of affection, Elfman attempts to smile, only to choke up instead. And then the woman is gone, leaving the actress awash in tears. ◆ "Oh, my God," she mumbles, wiping her eyes as an assistant claims her to shoot the next scene, "I just *totally* wrecked my makeup because that was, like, the most beautiful thing in the world ever."

WITH DHARMA & GREG, ABC HAS A HIT AND AMERICA A LOOPY SWEETHEART IN JENNA ELFMAN. OH, YEAH, THERE'S SOME GUY IN IT, TOO.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEPHANIE PFRIENDER

ENTER LAUGHING: GIBSON & ELFMAN

CASTE AND CREW: (Top) Gibson and Elfman on set with Bud (a.k.a. Nunzio); creator Lorre (bottom, center) observes a rehearsal

Deepak Chopra couldn't have orchestrated a more blissful encounter. It's enough to make you sick—were it not for Elfman, a motormouthed ball of spunk who could melt even Lou Grant's heart. Love—big goopy handfuls of it—fuels the actress and her sitcom, which somehow manages to narrowly avert cloying cuteness, thanks to Elfman's unaffected and seemingly boundless enthusiasm. Not since Paul and Jamie shared their first kvetch on *Mad About You* has a romantic comedy struck such a cleverly cornball chord: It's currently TV's No. 23-ranked series and—along with Fox's *Ally McBeal*—the only new show this season to shine by virtue of content rather than time slot. Furthermore, it builds on its *Spin City* lead-in and wins virtually every demographic, including those perennially jaded 18- to 34-year-olds. "There were already tons of shows about overanalytical, miserable women," notes *Dharma* exec producer Dottie Dartland. "It's like, God, how great it'd be to see a character who isn't neurotic, insecure, and in a bad relationship."

Meet Dharma Finkelstein, late-'90s groovy granola chick. It's karmic destiny when the perky do-gooder (Elfman) bumps into seriously upper-crust lawyer Greg (*Chicago Hope*'s Thomas Gibson), and the two wind up getting hitched on their first date. Toss this yin-yangy, *Bridget Loves Bernie*-esque couple and their worlds-apart parents into a snappy script by hit-machine producer Chuck Lorre (creator of *Cybill* and *Grace Under Fire*), and you've got the formula for a loopy heart-warmer. (How loopy? Dharma has two dogs, Stinky and Nunzio. Nunzio was Stinky's bar mitzvah present.) "If we're going to be tagged as a corny series, so be it," says Lorre. "But I prefer...hopeful."

Pity Elfman's costar, Gibson, for most of that hope—and the media love-in—centers on the 26-year-old actress. Enchanted critics tend to prattle on about her "ditsy, armor-piercing charm" and "sensual looks," while almost ignoring her hunky colleague. "There's no competition here," contends Gibson. "It's great for the show, period. I'll just let her do all the work."

But enough about Gibson... "There's a lot of substance behind Jenna," declares her time-slot neighbor Drew Carey. "Women like her because she's real honest, and guys like her just because she's a *babe*."

Labeled a breakout star last year in ABC's Molly Ringwald dud *Townies*, Elfman now finds herself in the role of This Year's Téa Leoni, The Hot Biscuit du Jour, TV's New It Girl, and Yet Another Star Who'll Rescue ABC From the Ratings Dumpster. "Yeah, I know there's all this pressure on me: 'Jenna Elfman will save ABC,'" she says breezily. "If I can help, I will. I love helping people. You need some help? I'll help you. But I'm not going to save the planet."

S SAVIORS GO, Elfman came from comparatively plush beginnings. She grew up in the middle-class L.A. suburb of Northridge; talked so much as a kid her sixth-grade math teacher stuck electrician's tape over her mouth; studied to be a professional ballerina; slacked after high school and listened to Warrant and Whitesnake all day; began acting in soda and zit commercials; was a "Legs Girl" on ZZ Top's 1994 tour (but quit after a few months: "I'd see this 11-year-old kid rocking out to me while I'm grinding away in a G-string and fishnets, and I said, 'Can't do this!'"); and landed on *Townies* last fall as Ringwald's slutty (yet lovable) bud, Shannon.

Her second-banana stint on that show turned out to be a ripe gig indeed, as network and studio execs suddenly began vying for her services. "Jenna is one of the more refreshing people you'll ever meet," says ABC Entertainment president Jamie Tarses. "She's so warm and so uninhibited. She doesn't have any of those editing mechanisms." (Example: After *Townies* was canceled, then–ABC chair Ted Harbert came up to her at a party and said consolingly, "Don't worry, we'll get you some work." Her response? "Great, but I'm not gonna do your little venereal disease movies-of-the-week!")

On *Townies*' final day of production, the Big Break came: She signed a development deal at Twentieth Century Fox TV. (ABC would later outbid rival NBC for the show.) "So we're shooting the episode, and Molly's upset, and everybody's crying, and I'm like, boohooo-hoo, totally faking upset, because I just felt it wouldn't be cool to be like, 'YEAHHHH! I'm getting my own show!'"

Elfman immediately picked up the *Dharma* script and met

(PREVIOUS PAGE) STYLING: KIM YOUNG/GABLER/NOONAN; HAIR: KEVIN REYNOLDS/BIANCA BLYTH BEAUTY; MAKEUP: MONIKA BLUNDER/REX; TUXEDO: CALVIN KLEIN; SHIRT, TIE, CUFFS: J. LINDEBERG; DRESS: DOLCE & GABBANA; (OPPOSITE PAGE) STYLING: KIM YOUNG/GABLER/NOONAN; HAIR: KEVIN RYAN/BIANCA BLYTH BEAUTY; MAKEUP: MONIKA BLUNDER/REX; CLOTHING: PAUL SMITH WOMEN; HAT: RESURRECTION VINTAGE; SHOES: JOHN BARTLETT

PHOTOGRAPHS BY LARA JO REGAN/GAMMA-LIAISON

with Dartland and Lorre. Although enamored with Elfman's *Townies* work, Lorre also wanted to size the actress up. And can you blame him? The battle-hardened producer had spent the last six or so years enduring TV's most tempestuous divas—Roseanne, Brett Butler, and Cybill Shepherd—and left *Grace* and *Cybill* under less-than-friendly circumstances. "That which does not kill us makes us bitter," he says with a chuckle. "I'd be foolish if I wasn't a little wary of who I was going to be working with this time and whether or not they'd let me wear my hat as a writer and producer. But from the very beginning, there was a joyfulness about Jenna. She gave us complete support and trust. And it was contagious."

With the super love machine in full gear, the search for Greg began (with some difficulties: "Jenna is such a formidable presence," recalls Tarses, "that actors would come in to read with her and she'd just blow them off the stage"). After several mismatches, they stumbled upon Gibson, who'd decided to hang up his *Hope* stethoscope in hopes of a meatier role. "A lot of guys were scared to get angry with her, but he wasn't," says Dartland. "Thomas was the first one who walked in and was her equal. Jenna is so much impulse and instinct, and he's a well-trained Juilliard actor, so they complement each other perfectly. That's the key to their chemistry."

It's also a key reason viewers have taken to *Dharma* in an instant. "Since *Mad About You*, a lot of people have tried to do romantic comedies just by putting people in conflict with cute and witty banter," says Tarses, who oversaw *Mad* while at NBC and shepherded *Dharma* at her new job with ABC. "But there wasn't a strong voice emanating from either character, and they weren't able to cast it so there was real chemistry."

In *Dharma*'s case, the rapport is more than just a concoction whipped up for the cameras. Spend a few minutes on set with Elfman and Gibson, and it's clear that their spirited (dare we say it, precious) banter (not to mention giggling, poking, tickling, even wrestling) is natural—maybe a little *too* natural. Seeing that both are married (Elfman, since 1995, to actor Bodhi Elfman; Gibson to Cristina, his wife of four years), one has to wonder how the respective spouses deal with the costars' hyper-chumminess. "Cristina and I used to have a policy that she'd get my paycheck every week if I had a love scene in a movie," reveals Gibson. "Then on *Chicago Hope*, it became, 'If you're not going to give me the paycheck, at least give me a piece of jewelry.' So now I have a great relationship with Tiffany. I walked in there after the pilot, and Kristen, my sales representative, said to me, 'We heard about the show, so we reserved an entire case for you.'"

Given *Dharma & Greg*'s abundant servings of daffy interplay, cutesy mugging, and lovey-dovey togetherness, how long before this shtick wears thin? Simply scan the current TV lineup and one thing becomes obvious: Viewers clearly favor a weekly rondelet of sex over lifetime commitment. (*Lois & Clark* bit the dust after those characters got hitched; *Spin City* ditched Michael J. Fox's live-in love halfway through its first season, because the creators felt the relationship just wasn't funny.) It's a challenge Dartland has considered. "We've got to throw rocks at them, but there's also a lot of conflict to be mined—jobs, parents—that doesn't need to put their relationship at risk." Adds Lorre: "The big challenge for people who've fallen in love is to stay in love. Every week, they should still be discovering one another. There'll be children; there'll be deaths and sickness."

PREVIOUS INCARNATIONS: Gibson (top, right) as *Hope*'s Dr. Nyland; Elfman (bottom, right) with Ringwald in *Townies*

Deaths and sickness? That ought to placate the cynics. As for the future of Dharma's offscreen alter ego, expect to see plenty more of Elfman. She recently shot a cameo in the Columbia dramedy *The Party* (starring *Party of Five*'s Jennifer Love Hewitt); in February, she'll appear with Richard Dreyfuss in the Disney comedy *Krippendorf's Tribe*. And at a striking 5'10", she's a likely candidate for umpteen fashion and beauty mags (*Cosmopolitan* and *In Style* are coming right up). In the face of gaudy stardom, though, Elfman maintains a rather simple and noble wish for the show, ratings be dharma'd: "I'd just like people to regain a passion for life and love," she says. "Passion, passion, passion! I was at this awards party, and I was all goofy blabby diarrhea-of-the-mouth starstruck, so I walked up to Jewel and said, 'I really admire you—you're young, but your songs are so full.' And she barely said *Thank you*, like she was scared, and I was like, '*What's to fear, dear?*' Too many people are wasting their time trying to be cool. If you get excited about something, it's totally okay to show it." TV's latest emotional exhibitionist is visibly excited—and for now, that's *totally okay* with America. ■

TOWNIES: JENNY FITZGERALD/ABC

Thank you for one trip down the river we'll never forget.

Thanks for Pat.

And for Mike.

And for the women, little and big.

Long live the queen.

Thanks for bringing out the best in Cary and Jimmy, and Bogey and Hank.

Thank you for that wonderful voice and that fabulous face.

For the wit and the intelligence, the candor and the strength.

Thanks for turning the Oscar® into your personal property.

Thanks for wearing the pants. (Did we mention that voice? Did we mention that face?)

To Spence and to all of us, you'll always be the woman of the year. Year after year after year.

Thanks for being our queen.

TURNER CLASSIC MOVIES
TCM
Movie Heaven

Katharine Hepburn Week
A 22-movie tribute, Nov. 17-23
Begins at 8pm (ET) each night

If you're not getting Turner Classic Movies, call your cable company and ask them to add it to your channel lineup.

Katharine Hepburn during the filming of *The Lion in Winter* (1968). ©1997 Turner Broadcasting System, Inc. A Time Warner Company.

REVIEWS

A CRITICAL LOOK AT THIS WEEK IN ENTERTAINMENT

Broadcast Noose

John Travolta's media martyr gets hung out to dry by Dustin Hoffman's scheming reporter in the knotty *Mad City*. **by Lisa Schwarzbaum**

SEEN THE NEW MOVIE ABOUT the TV journalist who reports an important story with sensitivity, who demonstrates unimpeachable professional ethics, and whose good work is rewarded by an appreciative boss and a grateful public?

Trick question. *Print* journalists may still generate a certain positive, post–*All the President's Men* buzz on screen for their enterprising, unglamorous ministrations in the service of investigative reporting (or, in the case of Julia Roberts in *My Best Friend's Wedding*, of restaurant criticism). But in the movies, the men and women who toil in broadcast news for indecent sums of money, rouging their cheeks, shoving their cameras in the faces of defenseless citizens, and boiling complex issues down to snappy 30-second sound bites do not fare as well.

Mad City
STARRING
John Travolta
Dustin Hoffman
RATED PG-13
114 MINUTES

This is nuts, of course, since the film industry relies more heavily than ever on television to promote its wares, giving inordinate attention to the whims of entertainment "news" shows that contain no news. But no matter. The spectre of a powerful medium run amok makes for dramatic moral lessons. *Network* sermonized with a satiric howl. *Broadcast News* commented with unsurpassed wit. *Up Close & Personal* didn't even know what it was saying, but it said something or other about the toll TV ambitions take on

CAMERA SLY: Hoffman and Travolta deliver *Mad*'s message

MURRAY CLOSE

high-strung women fickle about their hair color.

Mad City *(Warner Bros.)* makes its points with the kind of grim intensity that has always been a Costa-Gavras trademark. The man who directed *Z*, *Missing*, and *Music Box* sees nothing funny, *nothing funny at all*, about TV's insane scramble to make audience-grabbing news out of the wispiest bits of fact. (In his town, everyone's mad as hell, but they're used to taking it.) Here, the wispy bit is that family man Sam Baily (John Travolta, generously playing bloated and none too bright), undone because his job as a security guard at a local museum of natural history has been eliminated, loads up an old shotgun and a bag full of dynamite, and demands his post back just as his ex-boss (Blythe Danner) is escorting a group of children through an exhibit of dinosaur bones. (Those dinosaurs, children, are *print journalists*.)

Ah, but zipping up his fly in the men's room at that very moment after cranking out a dull report on the museum's budget cutbacks (*and still wired for broadcast*!) is experienced, demoted-from-the-networks investigative reporter Max Brackett (Dustin Hoffman, onetime *President's Men* newspaperman, in his first great movie role since *Rain Man*). Max spies what's going on. A gun goes off. Aha, thinks Max, a hostage situation! He sees huge ratings, a chance to play again in the big leagues. He inserts himself into the story, intensifying the standoff in order to make better television. And...*action*.

There's a great deal packed into this high-strung morality play: a little *Dog Day Afternoon*, a lot of *Network*, a stern scolding for the Branch Davidian disaster. There's a cheap-shot dissing of celebrity network-news anchors (effectively embodied by Alan Alda) as blow-dried gods who parachute into hot spots; there's an even cheaper-shot dissing of young women interns (simperingly embodied by *Exotica*'s Mia Kirshner) as amoral bunnies willing to ditch all common decency for the possibility of advancement via canoodling. There's so much, in fact, that *Mad City* staggers under the weight of its own apoplexy. The script, by newcomer Tom Matthews, is low on subtlety: "No one cares about people like me!" wails Sam. "This is America. It can make you crazy," opines an immigrant cabbie in a vox-pop assessment of Sam's culpability. And Costa-Gavras appears to care little about imposing visual or dramatic order on the proceedings, so impassioned is he by the urgency of his subject matter.

But—and this is a big but—those complexities are indeed vital. And the performances of Travolta and Hoffman are so fluid and intricate (watch for Hoffman's smart eyes and Travolta's tiny signature character details—the ungainly walk, the face momentarily scrunched in unbearable frustration) that *Mad City* generates its own kind of mad energy. It's not often that a movie addresses unemployment, tabloid journalism, opinion polls, and hostage negotiation and still finds room to jam in cameos by Jay Leno and Larry King and jokes about Mel Gibson. In his frantic desire to keep us paying attention to his *very important message*, Costa-Gavras has made a movie that's no less but certainly no more unhinged than the *CBS Evening News With Dan Rather*. **B–**

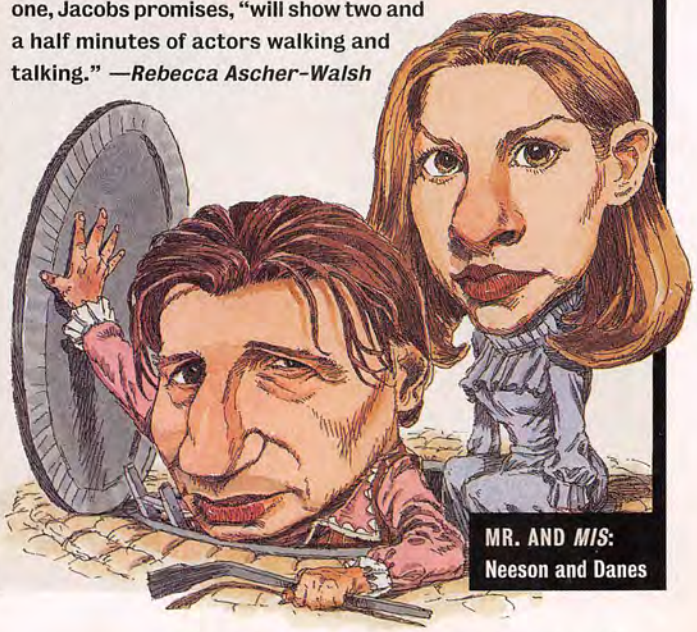
REELWORLD

This week in Hollywood

KEITEL

■ **FAIRY DUST** They may not be dueling volcanoes, but an awful lot of fairies are flitting around lately. Specifically, the Cottingley Fairies—sprites allegedly photographed in 1917 by two English girls. While *FairyTale—A True Story* (costarring Harvey Keitel) re-creates the Cottingley tale, *Photographing Fairies*, which bowed in September in the U.K., focuses on a man whose encounter with the photos spurs his search for his dead wife's spirit. "One film wanted to go *inside* the real story, and the other wanted to take the story and grow something out of it," says *FairyTale*'s director, Charles Sturridge. And what does Sturridge think of his competition? "I haven't seen it," he laughs, "because then I'd have to say, 'It's brilliant, much better than mine' or 'Total load of rubbish.' " *—Robin J. Schwartz*

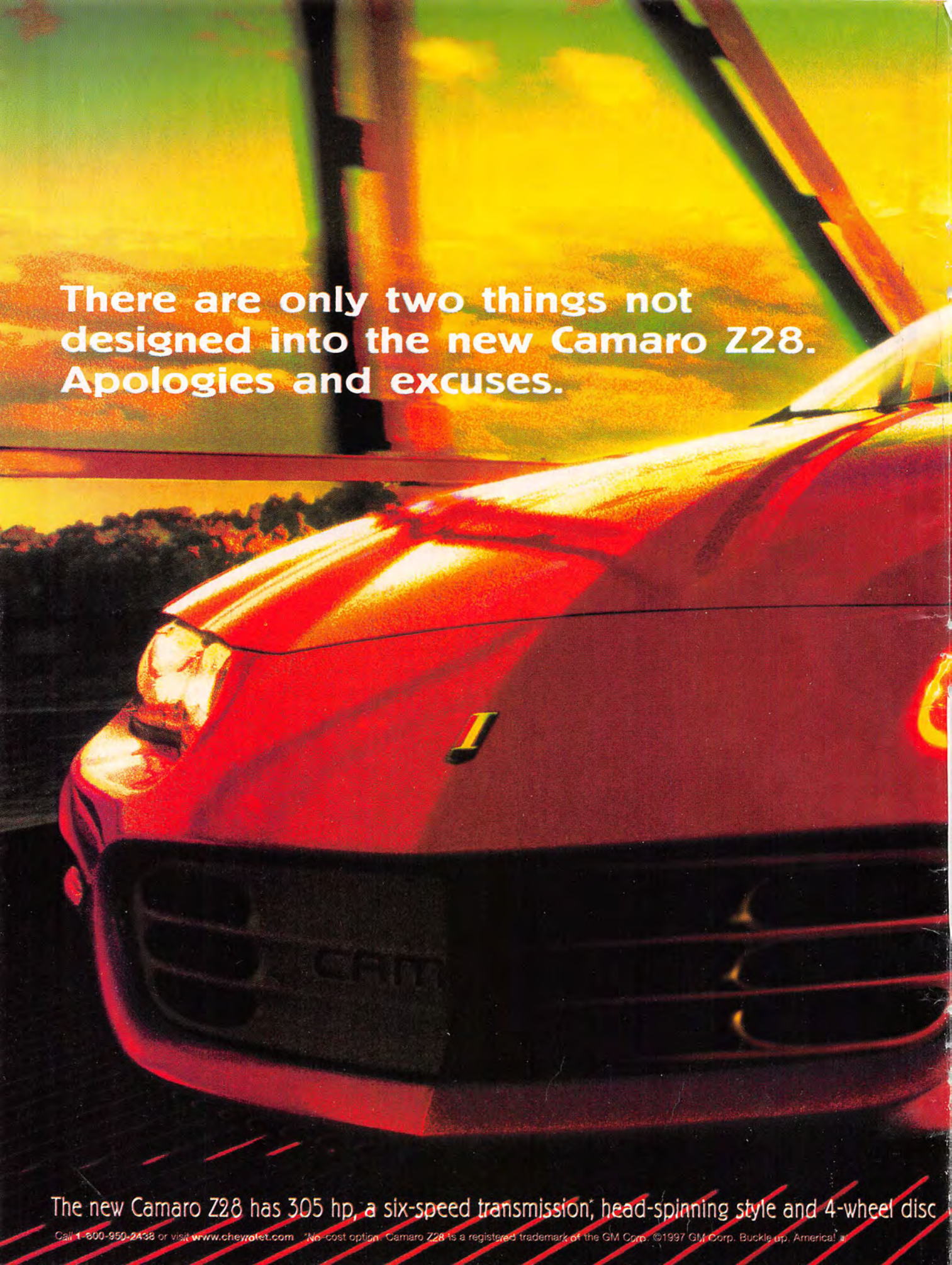
■ **LESS *MISERABLES*** If you had Liam Neeson, Uma Thurman, and Claire Danes in your movie, would you advertise a dark sewer instead of their fine faces? That's what's shown in *Les Misérables*' teaser trailer, while the stars' names appear on screen. "We wanted to get trailers into theaters attached to *Seven Years in Tibet*," says Mandalay's president of worldwide marketing, John Jacobs. And since the film wasn't finished, "we used what we had available." While *Les Misérables* won't be in theaters until February, Jacobs says, "we knew *Seven Years* would play to a similar audience. We're not talking about a young concept movie here, and people need to be educated." Come Christmas, a more conventional trailer will debut; this one, Jacobs promises, "will show two and a half minutes of actors walking and talking." *—Rebecca Ascher-Walsh*



MR. AND *MIS*: Neeson and Danes

SIMON KEIN

ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN CUNEO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ROWAN PAINS: Atkinson arrives

MELISSA MOSELEY

Refried Bean

In his first movie, *Bean*, Rowan Atkinson's danger-prone Brit twit remains tasty, if a bit soft

THE SELFISH YET INGENUOUS, antic yet nearly wordless exertions of Mr. Bean—the singular slapstick creation of British comedian Rowan Atkinson—is an acquired taste that, by now, has been acquired by a large portion of the planet: **Bean** *(Gramercy)*, the feature debut of the character already thriving on television (HBO, Comedy Central, and public TV Stateside) and video, made more than $120 million even before it found its way across the great herring pond. (Atkinsonians know that their man—the malaprop-prone priest in *Four Weddings and a Funeral*—is also the cocreator and star of the BBC cult hit *The Black Adder*.)

Now Bean has come ashore. He's saucer-eyed and rubbery, with a wardrobe inspired by Charlie Chaplin and Pee-wee Herman and a talent for exquisitely broad physical comedy shared with Jim Carrey and John Cleese. But what you make of *Bean* may depend on whether you know beans about Bean going in.

Lord knows *Bean* is strenuously wacky: In this setup, Mr. B is a hapless London museum security guard dispatched undercover (in a complicated act of sabotage) to an art gallery in easy-to-mock Los Angeles. Once entrusted to the care of the gallery's curator (*Chicago Hope*'s Peter MacNicol) and his wife (*Kindergarten Cop*'s Pamela Reed), he proceeds to wreak havoc with a liberating, blithely destructive resourcefulness matched only, perhaps, by Carrey's Fire Marshall Bill. He blows up a microwave. He vandalizes a masterpiece. He thinks flipping the bird is a friendly American greeting. (It's not?)

Bean
STARRING
Rowan Atkinson
Peter MacNicol
RATED PG-13
91 MINUTES

The trouble for pure Beanists (count me in) is—now, here's an odd one—that *Bean* doesn't let Bean stay consistently destructive *enough*; he's been sweetened and de-Britified for export. In this slapdash production directed by Mel Smith (*The Tall Guy* but also, alas, *Radioland Murders*), written by Richard Curtis (*Four Weddings*) and Robin Driscoll, there's just enough unrepentant self-centeredness missing to take the hilariously brutish edge off Bean's game for those who know him. Those who don't, meanwhile, may wonder whether this guy's supposed to be lovable, or mean, or what. He's supposed to be Bean, is all, and I say, why not give him to us full strength? **B** —*LS*

CRITICAL MASS

Here's how a sampling of critics and movie audiences from across the country grade 10 current releases.

	CINEMASCORE Audiences across the U.S.	ROGER EBERT Siskel & Ebert	GENE SISKEL Siskel & Ebert	JAMI BERNARD Knight-Ridder Syndicate	CARRIE RICKEY Knight-Ridder Syndicate	MIKE CLARK USA Today	ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY	AVERAGE*
Boogie Nights NEW LINE	C	A	B+	A	B	A+	A	A–
Eve's Bayou TRIMARK	—	A	B+	B–	B	B	A–	B+
Gattaca COLUMBIA	B–	A–	B+	B+	B–	B–	B–	B
I Know What You Did Last Summer COLUMBIA	B–	D	F	B–	—	C+	B–	C–
A Life Less Ordinary 20TH CENTURY FOX	C+	D	D	C	C+	D	F	D+
Mad City WARNER BROS.	—	C	C+	B	—	C	B–	C+
Red Corner MGM	B	C+	C	B+	C+	B	C+	B–
Starship Troopers TRISTAR	—	C–	B	—	C+	A	B+	B
Telling Lies in America BANNER	—	B	C+	—	C+	—	C+	B–
The Wings of the Dove MIRAMAX	—	B+	—	—	B–	—	A	B+

*AVERAGE DOES NOT INCLUDE CINEMASCORE.

Growing up, I got good at taking direction.
"Say your line here." "Hit your mark there." And "Drink your milk."
That's good advice for kids and adults. The calcium in milk helps bones
grow till you're about 35 and helps keep them strong long after.
So I still drink milk. Only now, I'm the one giving direction.
Courtesy of Paramount Pictures. The Andy Griffith Show. Copyright © 1960 Paramount Pictures. All Rights Reserved.

Czar Child

With *Anastasia*, the animated tale of a Russian princess, Fox sings Disney's 'toon

THANK HEAVEN FOR LITTLE GIRLS: Anya dreams of dancing with Maurice Chevalier in *Anastasia*

IT MAY NOT BE THE YEAR'S riskiest showbiz move, but you have to wonder why Twentieth Century Fox is launching its first counter-offensive against the Disney empire with **Anastasia**, a $50 million-plus animated musical that attempts to conjure up the shimmering fairy-tale wonder of...the demise of imperial Russia. For all their emotional sweep, the best Disney cartoons (*Snow White*, *The Lion King*) have had the razzle-dazzle appeal of fantasy. In *Anastasia*, however, veteran animation directors Gary Goldman and Don Bluth (*An American Tail*) marry their state-of-the-art facsimile of Disney's plush visual exuberance to something more self-consciously old-fashioned, a lavish period love story that strives for the tremulous romantic grandeur of a David Lean tearjerker.

Anastasia
VOICES BY
Meg Ryan
John Cusack
RATED G
93 MINUTES

Their heroine is Anastasia, starry-eyed princess of the Romanov dynasty, whose childhood comes to an abrupt end when the evil magician Rasputin (voiced by Christopher Lloyd) places a curse on the czar's family, thereby inciting the Russian revolution. Thrown off her pedestal, the newly orphaned Anastasia grows up into "Anya" (Meg Ryan), a spunky 18-year-old vagabond with only a dim recollection of her royal roots (she seems to be a victim of repressed memory syndrome). Then she runs into Dimitri (John Cusack), a former palace servant–turned–dashing con man. He's looking for someone to *pretend* to be the princess, so that he can return her to her exiled grandmother in Paris and collect a reward of many rubles.

Anastasia has the Disney house style down cold: the musical numbers that sound like mid-'60s Broadway, the gorgeous stately/psychedelic backgrounds, the funky beasties nattering on the sidelines. So why does the movie, for all its pleasurable craftsmanship, feel a touch depersonalized? Maybe because the story's somber emotional hook—Anastasia's thwarted desire for home—is asserted rather than dramatized. (This may have something to do with the fact that she's cast out of the palace before we've had a chance to enjoy her *being* there.) Lloyd's villain glowers and schemes, but there's little wit or surprise to his campily accented old-world theatrics. Aspiring young princesses will probably enjoy *Anastasia*, but for anyone else, this challenger to the Disney kingdom may prove to have everything but magic. **B–** —*Owen Gleiberman*

Health Nuts

In the cutting hospital satire *Critical Care*, director Sidney Lumet diagnoses the ills of modern medicine

MOST PEOPLE DON'T LIKE to go into hospitals, and they may feel the same way about a hospital movie. But don't let that keep you from seeing **Critical Care** *(LIVE)*, a terrifically smart and entertaining send-up of what actually goes on in an intensive care unit. James Spader plays a cynical resident who views being a doctor as an easy way to pick up women. Early on, he "comforts" a grieving sexpot, played with blowsy bravura by Kyra Sedgwick. She has come to visit her father, a rotting vegetable being kept in a state of permanent unconscious limbo by the miracle of modern technology. Sedgwick and her religious-fanatic sister turn out to be warring over the old man's fortune.

Critical Care
STARRING
James Spader
Kyra Sedgwick
RATED R
109 MINUTES

For all the ruthlessness on display, *Critical Care* isn't an over-the-top satire, like Paddy Chayefsky's *The Hospital*. It plays its issues close to the bone. As Spader is blackmailed by Sedgwick, we watch him squirm to survive, and the result is the actor's slyest performance since *sex, lies, and videotape*. The film also features a rambunctious vaudeville turn by Albert Brooks as a senile managing physician who's wilier than he looks. Blithely directed by Sidney Lumet, *Critical Care* takes off on the ways that law, profit, technology, and—yes—compassion have combined to create new ethical nightmares in medicine. It's the sort of clever mainstream comedy that Hollywood used to do more of, and that now arrives as an unexpected pleasure. **A–** —*OG*

VICE RESIDENT: Spader loses his patients in *Critical Care*

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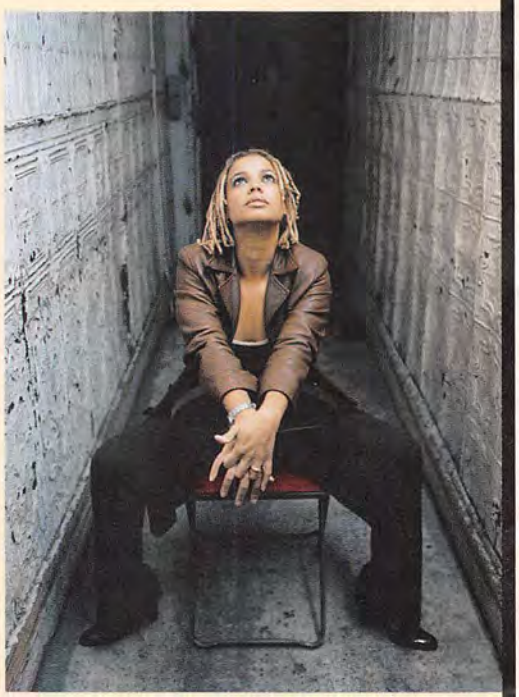
WRITER-DIRECTOR OF 'EVE'S BAYOU'

LEMMONS AND LINES

"IMPOSSIBLE TO produce" is what Kasi Lemmons heard when she was shopping her screenplay *Eve's Bayou* two years ago—and that was a relatively *nice* comment, considering that it came from her own producer. "It was crazy," Caldecot Chubb (*The Crow*) now says of taking on the haunting family drama. "It has an all-black cast, mostly women. It's period, it's rural, and it's told from a child's point of view."



And behind it was the fiercely stubborn Lemmons, who was determined to make *Eve's Bayou* her feature directorial debut, despite the difficulties of being untested, African-American, a woman, and pregnant.

"I remember having a meeting with a producer, and she said, 'The problem with women directors is they go off and get f---ing pregnant,' " says the thirtysomething Lemmons, who was battling morning sickness at the time. "I said, 'Excuse me,' and went to the bathroom to throw up."

This month, Lemmons reveals the fruits of her labor, which may have some studios wishing they had leapt at the chance to pony up the $4 million in financing. *Eve's Bayou* stars Samuel L. Jackson (who also produced), Lynn Whitfield, and Debbi Morgan as family members battling demons—both visible and hidden—over the course of one summer in the '60s.

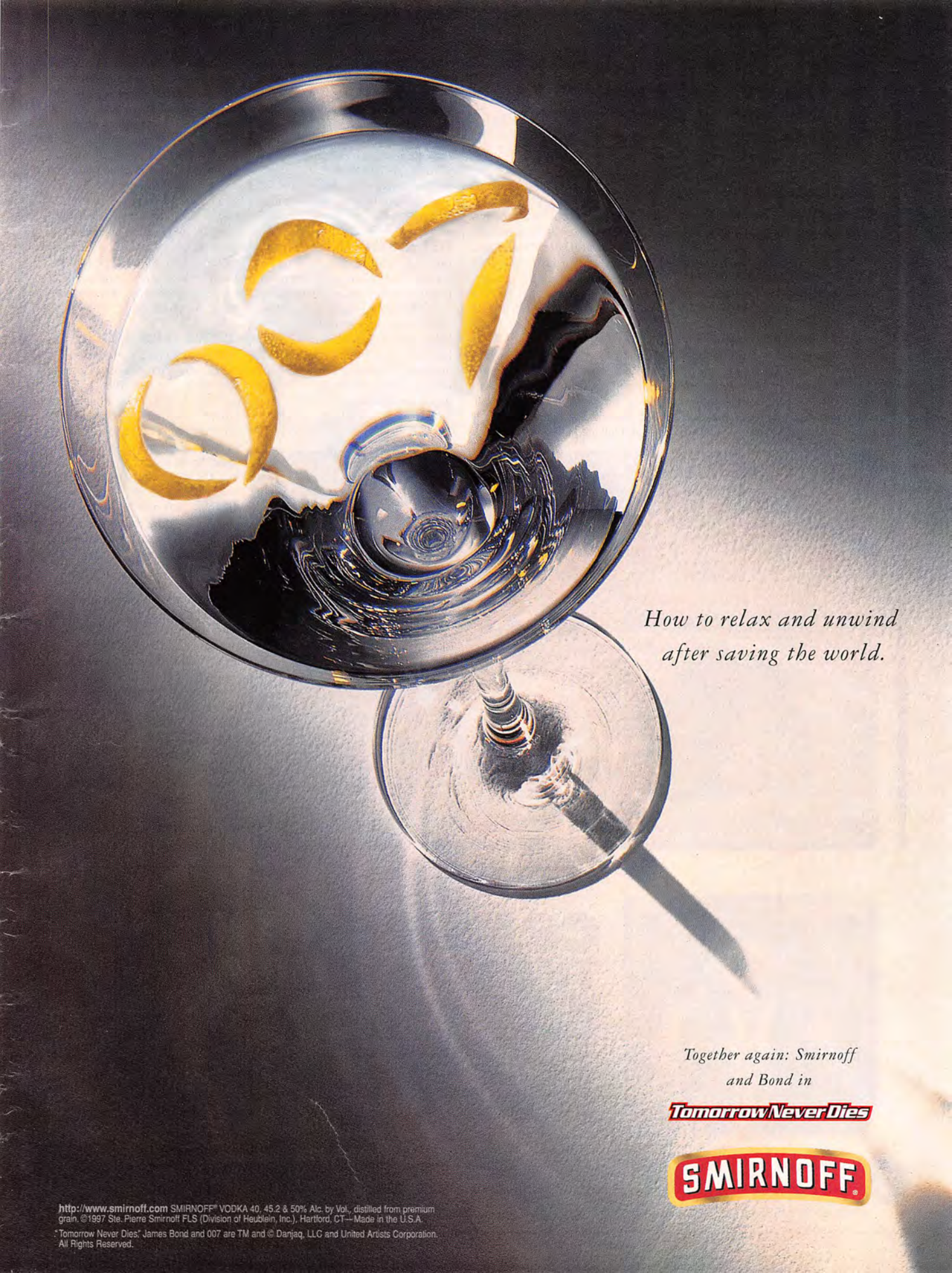
Lemmons—who is married to actor-director Vondie Curtis Hall (a regular on *Chicago Hope*, he also helmed this year's *Gridlock'd*)—says she wrote the script "as insurance for the day when I was 50 and couldn't get into my little black audition dress anymore." (Lemmons has appeared in such films as 1991's *The Silence of the Lambs* and 1993's *Hard Target*.) Major studios didn't bite, but when Jackson agreed to star and produce, Trimark—which was looking to change its image—signed on. "They needed a prestigious film," says Lemmons, "and they really [wanted] to be in business with Sam Jackson."

After a frenetic 37-day shoot on location in Louisiana (with her 6-week-old son, Hunter) and six months of editing, Lemmons is settling back into her home in L.A., working on a screenplay based on the 1992 thriller *The Impersonator* with her husband, who will direct, and anxiously watching the growing enthusiasm for *Eve's Bayou*. "You spend a lot of time bulls---ting about how it can be a big movie, but in my heart, it's a tiny little film," she says. "This is so close to my dream movie. Actually, it's better." —*RAW*

***BAYOU* BELIEVERS:** Lemmons (top); Whitfield and Jurnee Smollett keep it in the family

HAIR & MAKEUP: SHADÉ FOR MAREK; STYLING: LEILA MWANGI; PANTS: PATRICK COX; JACKET: CALVIN KLEIN; SHIRT: PAUL COUP; SHOES: PATRICK COX; *RAVEN*: CHRIS HELCERMANAS-BERGE

PHOTOGRAPH BY JO ANN TOY



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The Week

Reviews by OWEN GLEIBERMAN and LISA SCHWARZBAUM

New Releases

SWITCHBACK *(Paramount, R)* Dennis Quaid grits his teeth and knits his brow as Frank LaCrosse, an FBI agent so monotonously dour he makes *The X-Files*' Fox Mulder seem like Richard Simmons. After a serial killer kidnaps his son, LaCrosse goes AWOL from the bureau and trails a retired railroad man (Danny Glover, killing time between *Lethal Weapons*) and a mysterious drifter (*My So-Called Life* cipher Jared Leto), one of whom may be the culprit. In his directorial debut, screenwriter Jeb Stuart (*Die Hard*) ladles on the clichés—a barroom brawl, a train-top chase—and lets his narrative get bogged down in a boring subplot about a local sheriff's election. The thoroughly routine *Switch-Back* may ultimately be remembered as the year's most forgettable movie. **D+** —*Bruce Fretts*

In Theaters

BOOGIE NIGHTS *(R)* It offers a purer hit of exhilaration than any movie this year. Writer-director Paul Thomas Anderson traces the rise and fall of Eddie Adams (Mark Wahlberg), a San Fernando Valley busboy who becomes Dirk Diggler, the hottest name in the adult-film business. Dirk's fortunes parallel the shifts in the porn industry, from the bedazzled hedonism of the late '70s to the capitalist narcissism of the '80s. For all its bravura, the most shocking aspect of *Boogie Nights* is its tenderness. **A** (#401, Oct. 17) —*OG*

THE DEVIL'S ADVOCATE *(R)* Embarrassingly entertaining. A young attorney (Keanu Reeves) is recruited to join a New York law firm run by John Milton (Al Pacino), a lawyer so ruthless, so egomaniacal, that he's...well, he's even more shameless than Alan Dershowitz. Pacino, of course, is playing the devil himself, and the premise of his outrageous performance is that it's *fun* to be the baddest guy on God's block. **B** (#402, Oct. 24) —*OG*

DENNIS THE MENACE: Quaid tracks down a serial killer who has snatched his son in *SwitchBack*

MELISSA MOSELEY

EVE'S BAYOU *(R)* Kasi Lemmons' fluid, feminine, African-American, Southern-gothic narrative covers a tremendous amount of emotional territory with the most graceful of steps. Young Jurnee Smollett plays 10-year-old Eve, struggling to understand the womanizing of her adored daddy (Samuel L. Jackson in easy, sexy command) and the passions of her big sister; Debbi Morgan, in a blazing performance, plays Eve's vibrant aunt, infused with good-witch spiritual powers. The film's dream-state visual elegance is matched by a great soundtrack. **A–** (#404, Nov. 7) —*LS*

FAIRYTALE—A TRUE STORY *(PG)* In 1917, two British girls created a media stir with photos of fairies that they claimed lived in their garden. It's a neat idea for a movie—too bad director Charles Sturridge can't decide which movie to make. This one is too heady for small fries, too sticky for grown-ups. **C+** (#403, Oct. 31) —*Ty Burr*

GATTACA *(PG-13)* In a future in which parents can tailor their unborn children to precise specs, Ethan Hawke impersonates one of the genetic elite so he can realize his dream of space travel. Andrew Niccol's cautionary parable is in the tradition of Big Think sci-fi like George Lucas' *THX 1138*. Sets, music, and imagery are rigorously controlled and undeniably stunning, but after a while flaws creep into the plot's double helix. **B–** (#403, Oct. 31) —*TB*

HAPPY TOGETHER *(Unrated)* Wong Kar-Wai's narratively disjointed, visually luscious story about a restless young gay Hong Kong couple (Tony Leung Chiu-Wai and Leslie Cheung) in love and in war in Buenos Aires. The vignettes don't add up to a story, but Wong's

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ILLUSTRATION BY ROBERT DE MICHIELL

WINNER OF THE WEEK

Tennessee Williams

He's been dead for more than a decade, but *One Arm*, an unproduced script by the playwright, was just optioned by director Tony Kaye (the upcoming *American History X*).

LOSER OF THE WEEK

'Grizzly Mountain'

In its opening weekend, Dan Haggerty's new family flick eked out a measly $786-per-screen average.

nervy brio and subterranean-fantasy style make for an arresting work about an exotic subculture. **B–** (#404, Nov. 7) —*LS*

I KNOW WHAT YOU DID LAST SUMMER *(R)* Written by Kevin Williamson, who penned the genre-bending script for *Scream*, this is nothing but a slick version of the kind of gruesomely formulaic teen slasher film that *Scream* took off from. The story has more holes than the bodies do, but the shocks are efficient, and *Party of Five*'s Jennifer Love Hewitt knows how to scream with soul. **B–** (#402, Oct. 24) —*OG*

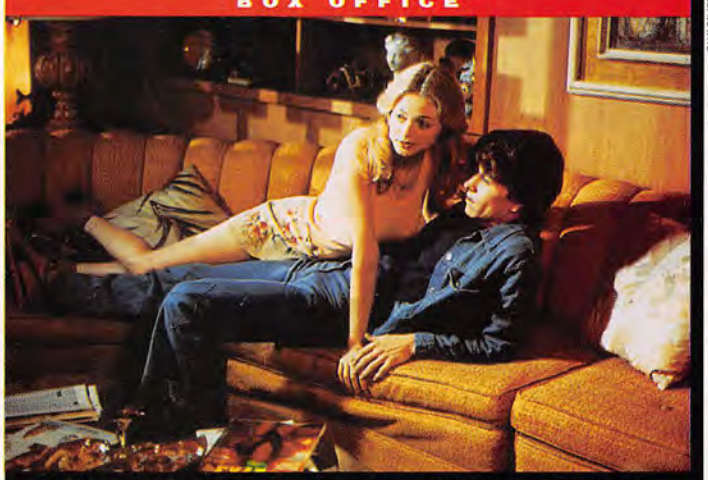
RED CORNER *(R)* Richard Gere, always least interesting when cast as a good guy, is an entertainment lawyer on business in the Chinese capital who goes to bed with a model and wakes up next to a corpse; what follows plays like *Midnight Express* as scripted by Ally McBeal. This is Hitchcock's old wrong-man plot in a novel setting, but it's helped immeasurably by Bai Ling's quietly rich portrayal of Gere's court-appointed attorney. **C+** (#404, Nov. 7) —*TB*

STARSHIP TROOPERS *(R)* A kick-ass teenybop creature-feature spectacular. In the techno-fascist future, a group of young soldiers journey to a distant planet to engage in apocalyptic warfare with some very, very big bugs. The main predators are the Arachnids, spider/scorpion hybrids with razory legs that can poke through your chest in an instant. Directed by Paul Verhoeven, this hyperactive death-sport videogame turns its audience into vicarious Terminators. The movie is sensationally exciting, but its hey-kids-let's-put-on-a-war! story line plays like *Beverly Hills, 90210* recast as a military-recruitment film for the Third Reich. *Starship Troopers* could become ground zero for a new generation of thrill junkies—the first generation, perhaps, that won't need, or even desire, movie stars. **B+** (#404, Nov. 7) —*OG*

TELLING LIES IN AMERICA *(PG-13)* Kevin Bacon's sharply drawn portrayal of a payola-pocketing disc jockey in early-1960s Cleveland is the best thing about this conventional but heartfelt semiautobiographical coming-of-age story written by Joe Eszterhas. Brad Renfro plays the Eszterhas stand-in, an ostracized, Hungarian-born teenager who becomes the DJ's malleable assistant. Yet the young man is never more than a sketch, and his path to Americanness is far less interesting than his mentor's crooked road to ruin. **C+** (#404, Nov. 7) —*LS*

THE WINGS OF THE DOVE *(R)* This adaptation of Henry James' 1902 novel has a lush yet aching beauty. In London in 1910, Kate (Helena Bonham Carter), the ward of her manipulative rich aunt, is enmeshed in a passionate but secret involvement with Merton (Linus Roache), a handsome journalist possessed of everything but money. When Kate befriends Millie (Alison Elliott), an American heiress who, it turns out, is dying, a scheme forms: Kate and Merton will accompany Millie to Venice, where Merton will woo the poor woman, ultimately winning her fortune. The way this plays out is at once tender and cruel, ineffable and heartbreaking. Undeniably a "modernization" of James, *The Wings of the Dove* is also a great film—the finest "*Masterpiece Theatre* movie" ever made. **A** (#404, Nov. 7) —*OG*

BOX OFFICE



G. LEFKOWITZ

***NIGHTS* SHIFT:** '70s kids Heather Graham and Mark Wahlberg get down

BLAME IT ON THE 'BOOGIE'

THE QUESTION GOING into last weekend was, can *Boogie Nights* keep it up? Despite raves that packed houses for the porn-world drama in its initial limited release, when it expanded from 124 to 907 screens, a wider audience didn't follow: The movie's per-screen average plunged from $14,578 to $5,162. And while the Chinese government may be red in the face about what it perceives as Hollywood's current wave of anti-Chinese movies, American moviegoers apparently care little about the subject. *Seven Years in Tibet* has already gone down as the fall's most conspicuous failure; and despite a publicity-heavy debut that coincided with Chinese president Jiang Zemin's visit to the U.S., the Richard Gere vehicle *Red Corner* opened to a pallid $7.4 million.

TOP 20		WEEKEND GROSS*	NO. OF SCREENS †	WEEKEND PER-SCREEN AVERAGE	WEEKS IN RELEASE	GROSS TO DATE
1	**I KNOW WHAT YOU DID LAST SUMMER** *Columbia*	$9.4	2,524	$3,727	3	$45.3
2	**RED CORNER** *MGM*	$7.4	2,244	$3,299	1	$7.4
3	**THE DEVIL'S ADVOCATE** *Warner Bros.*	$7.4	2,404	$3,065	3	$37.3
4	**BOOGIE NIGHTS** *New Line*	$4.7	907	$5,162	4	$8.8
5	**KISS THE GIRLS** *Paramount*	$3.5	2,354	$1,492	5	$51.4
6	**SEVEN YEARS IN TIBET** *TriStar*	$3.3	2,103	$1,559	4	$31.0
7	**FAIRYTALE—A TRUE STORY** *Paramount*	$2.9	1,278	$2,271	2	$7.1
8	**SWITCHBACK** *Paramount*	$2.7	1,128	$2,398	1	$2.7
9	**GATTACA** *Columbia*	$2.6	1,279	$2,022	2	$8.2
10	**IN & OUT** *Paramount*	$1.7	1,659	$1,042	7	$59.2
11	**ROCKETMAN** *Walt Disney*	$1.5	1,760	$827	4	$13.0
12	**THE FULL MONTY** *Fox Searchlight*	$1.4	721	$1,970	12	$26.7
13	**L.A. CONFIDENTIAL** *Warner Bros.*	$1.3	1,003	$1,273	7	$31.5
14	**SOUL FOOD** *20th Century Fox*	$1.2	957	$1,281	6	$39.7
15	**BEAN** *Gramercy*	$1.0	245	$4,284	3	$6.4
16	**A LIFE LESS ORDINARY** *20th Century Fox*	$0.8	1,208	$701	2	$3.5
17	**THE PEACEMAKER** *DreamWorks*	$0.8	1,120	$718	6	$39.6
18	**THE EDGE** *20th Century Fox*	$0.7	1,018	$655	6	$25.9
19	**MEN IN BLACK** *Columbia*	$0.6	1,010	$615	18	$245.0
20	**AIR FORCE ONE** *Columbia*	$0.6	1,010	$615	15	$170.6

SOURCE: EXHIBITOR RELATIONS CO. INC. WEEKEND OF OCT. 31–NOV. 2 *WEEKEND GROSS AND GROSS-TO-DATE FIGURES IN MILLIONS †INCLUDES SOME MULTISCREEN THEATERS AND PRINTS SHIPPED AS WELL AS INDIVIDUAL SCREENS

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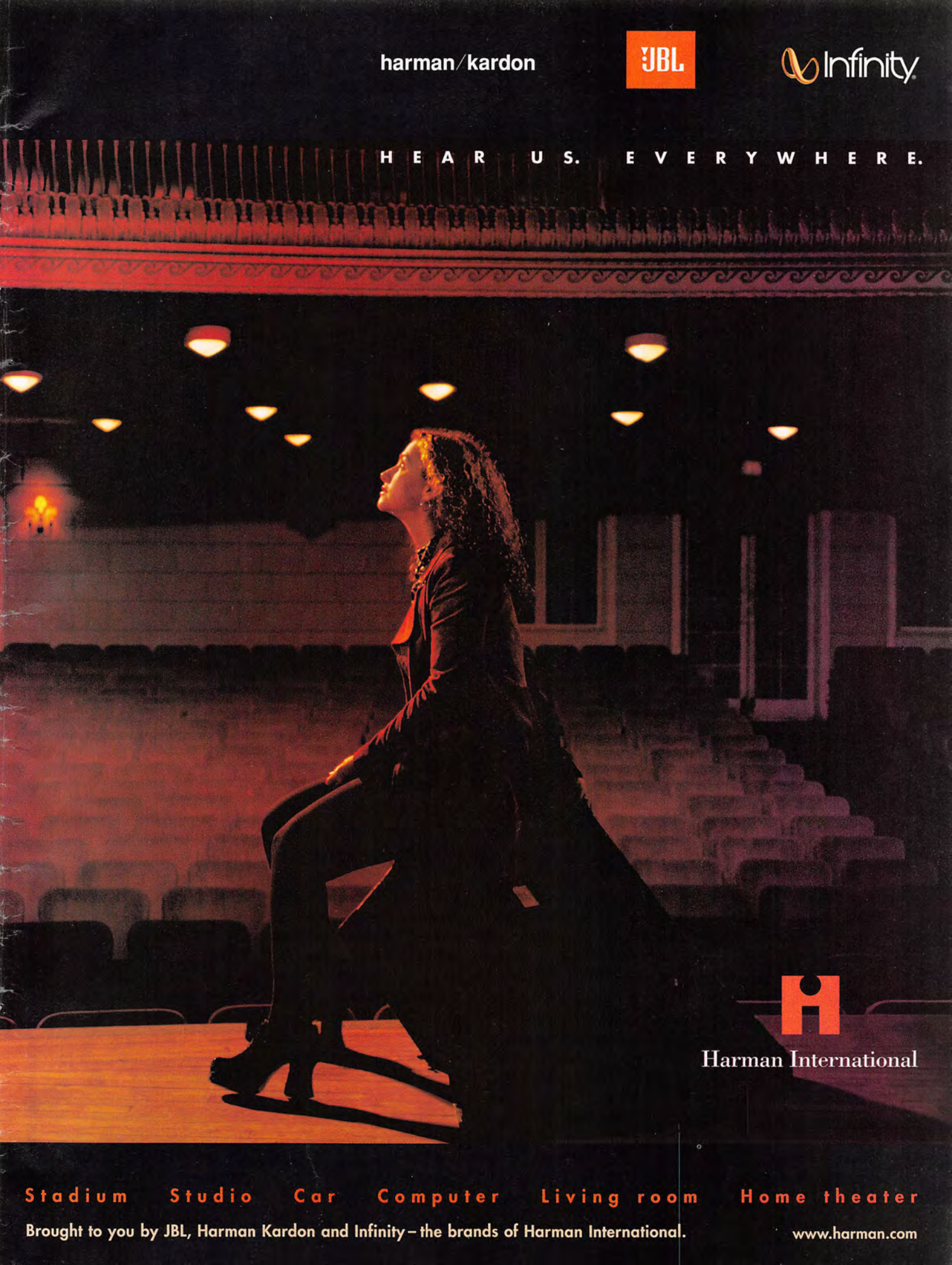

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In the Long Run...

The eternally appealing Beverly Hills gang has kept *90210* hopping, while a road-weary *Melrose Place* cast just limps along. **by Mark Harris**

IS ANY TV SPECTACLE sadder than the last march of a show that doesn't know its life is over? As grumpy and bone tired as an aging whorehouse madam, **Melrose Place** has trudged into its sixth season without a fresh idea in its teased blond head. On a recent Monday, the cast was grimly put through its paces: Sleazebag Michael was caught cheating on the woman he loves; uptight Amanda berated dim-and-dimmer Billy about his ad-agency responsibilities; there was some nonsense about a faked paternity test; and, of course, a face was slapped. The episode could have been a rerun were it not for all those bewildered, underwear-model-looking newcomers who replaced the six main cast members who ran for the hills last season.

FOX
Melrose Place
8–9 PM
MONDAYS

FOX
Beverly Hills, 90210
8–9 PM
WEDNESDAYS

That exodus was, it turns out, more than *Melrose* could bear. Although the ever-game, deserves-better Heather Locklear still spits out even the worst lines with snappish authority, and the diabolical-doctor duo of Jack Wagner and Thomas Calabro at least try to look interested, they can't sustain a show that has lost its best asset—a twisted joy in its own trashiness.

At its best—in the years bracketed by the return of crazy Kimberly (the awesome Marcia Cross) from the dead and her attempt to blow the entire cast to kingdom come—*Melrose Place* was both genuinely surprising and outrageously funny. Take away that anything-goes plotting and you're left with a dull series about gorgeous, ticked-off people having angry sex, then screwing each other over in played-out ways.

Ironically, as *Melrose* wanes, the series that spawned it, **Beverly Hills, 90210**, is showing new vigor. Long past both its cool phase and its no-longer-cool phase, *90210* has begun its eighth (!) season as a venerable TV institution—prime

MAY THE BEST TEAM WIN: (From left) *Melrose*'s Locklear and Lisa Rinna stumble; *90210*'s Garth and Priestley continue to stride right

ILLUSTRATION BY GLYNIS SWEENY

time's oldest and most unexpectedly enduring drama. Teen-appeal shows aren't supposed to last long, but *90210* has always been an oddity—a hybrid in which glossy melodrama and *Afterschool Special*-esque lessons coexist in a harmony that only Aaron Spelling could produce.

What's the secret? For one thing, *90210* has kept its cast almost as intact as Donna Martin's virginity—which is to say, not really, but more than most. And with college graduation behind them, the ensemble seems delighted to have entered the real world, which in Spellingvision means drive-by shootings, amnesia, and business-deal backstabbings. In particular, Jason Priestley (the stalwart Brandon) and Ian Ziering (the screwup Steve) look palpably relieved to be facing their 30s without words like *term paper* in their scripts. (And this year's ratings jump among 18- to 49-year-olds indicates that *90210*'s audience is aging just as efficiently as its cast.)

This season, the show has introduced two newcomers: Hilary Swank as Ziering's single-mom romantic foil, and Vincent Young, donning Luke Perry's mantle as the show's tortured-under-his-mousse loner. They're both perfectly fine. But *90210*'s strength continues to be its corny faith in the essential goodness of its long-running characters—even of bitch on wheels Val (played with apple-cheeked malevolence by Tiffani-Amber Thiessen).

90210'S GARTH AND PRIESTLEY

Yeah, you heard right: *goodness*. For all of its attention to sex (usually followed by crises), drugs (*always* followed by crises), and rock & roll (which, this season, is causing crises for would-be impresario David), *90210* has always been goofily heartfelt about its privileged youths; it actually seems to wish them well. Sure, the "important" plotlines can be groaners: This season, Tori Spelling's Donna discovered a sweatshop and, to her size 2 horror, learned about the existence of poor people. But after so many years, there's resonance in each development. We've watched the romance between Brandon and Kelly (Jennie Garth) unfold for over 200 episodes now; on TV, anything that lasts that long becomes peculiarly touching. (Try, by contrast, to think of a relationship on *Melrose* that took longer to go sour than an average carton of milk.) Whether longtime viewers are watching *90210* out of nostalgic affection or genuine curiosity, this durably sweet-natured series deserves credit for not selling their goodwill short. *Melrose Place:* **D** *90210:* **B**

ON THE AIR

The latest news from the TV beat by Joe Flint

BARTIROMO

■ **STOCK CHARACTER** It's been around since 1989 and reaches over 64 million households, but lately business-minded cable net CNBC has been suffering from a hostile takeover, publicity-wise, by its upstart sibling MSNBC, which successfully used overkill coverage of Princess Diana's death, the Marv Albert trial, and other assorted scandals to up its profile.

But the balance of power shifted again during the week of Oct. 27, courtesy of both the stock market nosedive (and subsequent rebound) and the hype surrounding reporter **Maria Bartiromo**, who—after building a name and fan base for herself as a reporter on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange—got a chance to shine as coanchor of CNBC's new show *Business Center*. Now the 30-year-old Brooklyn native's face is popping up everywhere—including a recent appearance on CBS' *Late Show With David Letterman*.

Dubbed the "money honey" and the "biz babe" by the press, Bartiromo has also made an impression on traders, who swear that the market goes up whenever she wears red. But Bartiromo could do without the nicknames and fashion tips. "It's a little disheartening, and it has overshadowed my work," she says. "It definitely ignores my achievements and ability to break news."

She's certainly not being ignored by network suits. The net is spending serious money promoting her and the show (also anchored by **Tyler Mathisen**) in an attempt to cut into CNN's *Moneyline With Lou Dobbs*. Although *Moneyline*'s ratings haven't been affected yet (in fact, the week of the market plunge, the show's ratings were more than double those of *Business Center*), CNN is preparing for battle.

"*Moneyline* is trying to get a lot hipper," acknowledges one CNN staffer of the show's efforts to ward off its challenger. Even Bartiromo, who spent five years as a producer and editor at CNN before leaving for CNBC, has noticed some changes at her old place of work. "During the first week of our launch, Dobbs took his show to the floor of the stock exchange—it was a little telling considering that's where I report from every week," she says. A CNN staffer counters that Dobbs was there because it was the 10th anniversary of the 1987 crash, not to try to upstage Bartiromo. Fair enough, but don't let us catch him wearing red.

DOHERTY

■ **AND SO ON** **Shannen Doherty**'s looking to make a return to prime time next fall in a role that some would say she's born to play. The premise, sources say, has Doherty playing a TV star with a bad rep. Ruthanne Secunda, one of Doherty's agents at United Talent, would confirm only that "it's a sitcom that will make use of Shannen's experience in the entertainment world." ■

90210: RON TOM; DOHERTY: BARRY KING/GAMMA-LIAISON

I Want My Ice-TV!

With his new crime drama *Players*, the rapper does prime time as a badass gone good. Can this be the guy who rocked the right wing with "Cop Killer"? by Kristen Baldwin

HERE'S A LESSON FROM Irony 101: Five years ago, Ice-T was conservative America's whipping boy, after his thrash-metal ditty "Cop Killer" ignited a First Amendment furor and sent his Time Warner-owned record label into bad publicity-fueled apoplexy. Today, he's starring on NBC's *Players* (Fridays, 8–9 p.m.) as an ex-con–turned–crime fighter—a concept *he* created. ("I designed a show that would keep me around nice clothes, nice cars, and women," he explains.) What did it take for the 39-year-old rapper to go from Public Enemy No. 1 to TV's No. 1 network? Read on.

TO THE POINT: "This was a show written by me and for me," says Ice-T of his dramatic turn

HE'S GOT FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES: Guest-starring on *New York Undercover* and *Swift Justice* gave Ice the ear of prolific TV producer Dick Wolf. "I don't think it's a show I would have responded to if [Ice] wasn't a part of the mix," says Wolf, who liked the idea of using the rapper to put a modern twist on the *Dirty Dozen*-esque theme. On a flight from Boston to Los Angeles, Wolf ran the concept past his pal, NBC Entertainment president Warren Littlefield: "I told him the idea in eight words. He said, 'Oh, yeah, let's do it.'"

WHITE PEOPLE LIKE HIM: "That's what people told me when I first started," Ice-T says. "I'm somebody who could always explain myself in a way that's not too, like, *scary* to white people." Even spooking Charlton Heston with "Cop Killer" didn't destroy Ice's crossover appeal. Says Wolf: "I've never gotten the reaction [from fans] that I got on the street with Ice," he says of filming *Players*' pilot in Manhattan. "There were 40-year-old white teamsters leaning out of trucks going, 'Yo, Ice!'" Getting the Man's support doesn't mean Ice has lost his street cred, however. "The rap community at this point is so intelligent, they're happy for me," he says. "They're giving me the thumb up."

HE KNOWS WHEN TO BEND: Ice's 1995–96 British series, *Baadasss TV*—a celebration of "oddities of black culture"—exploited lax UK programming rules. "On British TV you can get away with a lot," he says. "We did episodes on Long Dong Silver and black condom manufacturers." So was moving to the much more uptight world of American television a downer? "You don't get mad at it," he says. "Just know what's allowed." That meant not being miffed at the mainstreaming of his *Players* concept—which originally had the ex-cons working solo rather than for the Feds. "That has to do with the American public wanting to believe law enforcement [officers] are right," he says. Does Ice believe that? "I believe in doing the right thing, but I don't believe that just because you put on a uniform that makes you right."

HE KEEPS HIS OPTIONS OPEN: While Ice continues to rap (he hopes to sign with a new label and have his next album, *Seven Deadly Sins*, out by March), he isn't precluding another TV show should *Players* play itself out (so far, though, it's coming in a strong second in its time slot). "I don't think I'd want to be on a sitcom," he says. "But if I could make as much money as Tim Allen, I'd be the funniest motherf---er on TV." Coming next fall: *Homey Improvement.* ■

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARISSA ROTH

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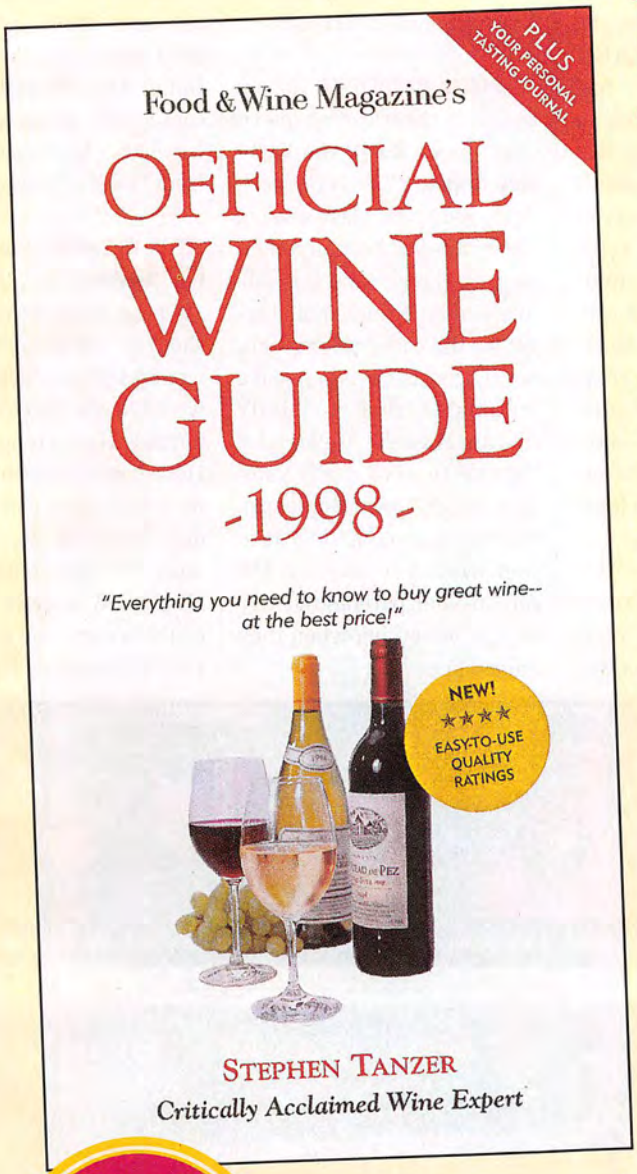

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REMOTEPATROL

Keeping a watch on TV by Bruce Fretts

Guilty of scene-stealing—a lineup of prime time's most wanted supporting actors

MAYBE YOU don't know all their names—yet. If you've watched their shows lately, however, they've caught your eye. They're this year's breakout character actors, some of them relative rookies, others seasoned veterans who've paid their SAG dues with thankless parts in projects unworthy of them. Now they all have two things in common: They've landed plum supporting roles on quality series. And they're all talented enough to deserve shows of their own some day.

ANDREA THOMPSON She debuted on **NYPD Blue** *(ABC, Tuesdays, 10–11 p.m.)* last season in a recurring role as Det. Jill Kirkendall. Now that she's a regular, we've seen a lot more of her—figuratively and literally. Her first seminude scene, seducing squirrelly ADA Leo Cohen (Michael Buchman Silver) to get inside info on a cop-corruption case, was mighty impressive. Even more impressive is the smoky-throated Thompson's ability to portray a hard-nosed cop convincingly.

JASON BATEMAN He'd already done six sitcoms (from *Silver Spoons* to *Chicago Sons*) but never a *good* one until **George & Leo** *(CBS, Mondays, 9:30–10 p.m.)* came along. As Bob Newhart's underachieving chef son, Bateman gets to show off the comic chops he developed over all those years toiling in laugh-track land. Plus, he can pick up a few tips on timing from old masters Newhart and Judd Hirsch.

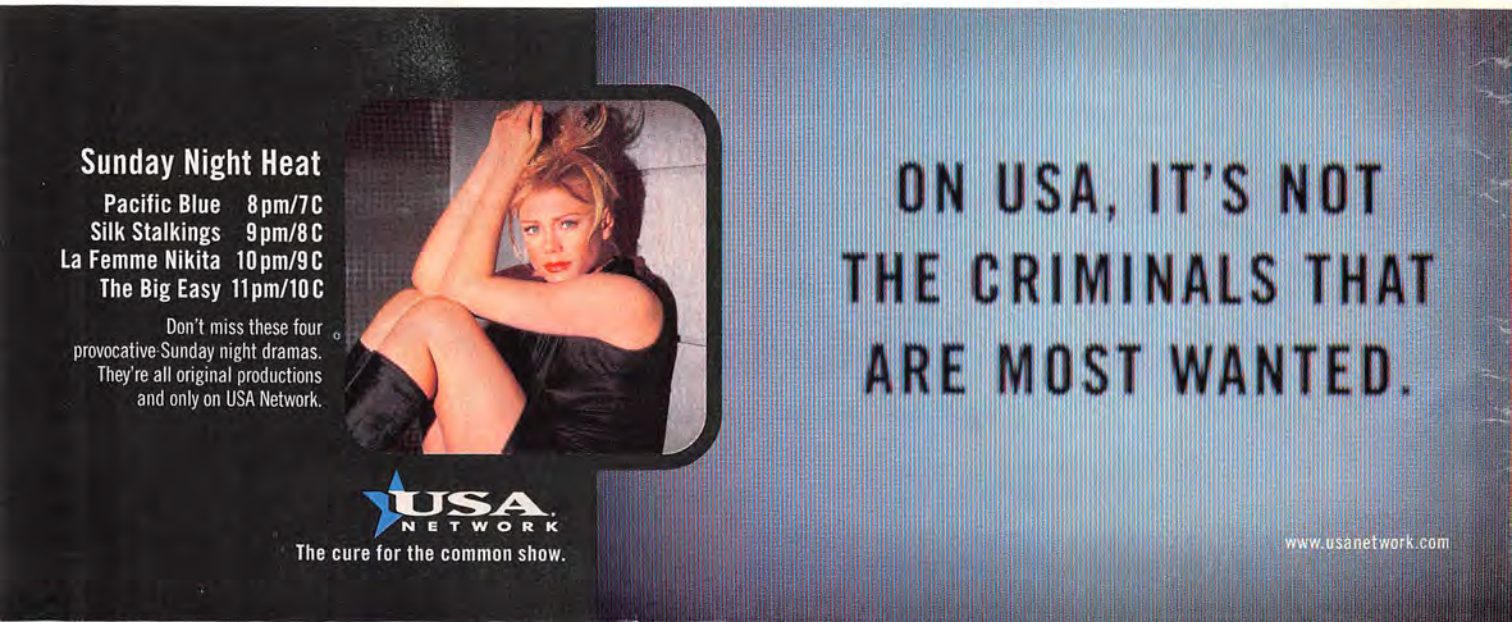
CHARISMA CARPENTER Barely visible as cheerleading queen Cordelia on **Buffy the Vampire Slayer** *(The WB, Mondays, 9–10 p.m.)* last season, Carpenter has been given increased screen time this fall. She makes a fine comic target for the wisecracking Xander (Nicholas Brendon) and a formidable rival to Buffy (Sarah Michelle Gellar) for the affections of studly vampire Angel (David Boreanaz). Charisma commands attention whenever she's on the screen—her parents must've known something when they named her.

BRANDON HAMMOND He's only 13 years old, but Hammond has already amassed a long list of credits, including roles in *Space Jam* (as the young Michael Jordan) and in the surprise hit *Soul Food*. Still, as the star's son on **The Gregory Hines Show** *(CBS, Fridays, 9–9:30 p.m.)*, Hammond doesn't seem like a professional child actor—and that's a good thing. There's nothing self-consciously cutesy about him. In short, he doesn't suffer from Webster's disease.

TITUS WELLIVER When **Brooklyn South** *(CBS, Mondays, 10–11 p.m.)* premiered, we thought Welliver's tightly wound Officer Jack Lowery would be the show's resident nutcase. How wrong we were. He's shown surprising tenderness in dealing with the sudden death of his shrewish wife, Yvonne (Jana Marie Hupp). Welliver's Lowery could become the most complex TV cop since Sipowicz.

MAGNIFICENT SEVEN: *Blue*'s Thompson, *G&L*'s Bateman, *Buffy*'s Carpenter, *Hines*' Hammond, *South*'s Welliver, *Homicide*'s Seda, and *Raymond*'s Heaton

THOMPSON: FRANK OCKENFELS; BATEMAN: JEFF SLOCOMB/OUTLINE; CARPENTER: GREG LAVY; HAMMOND: MONTY BRINTON; WELLIVER, HEATON: TONY ESPARZA; SEDA: CHRIS HASTON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JON SEDA After a blistering turn as a spectacularly self-destructive convict on Tom Fontana's HBO prison drama *Oz*, Seda has switched sides to costar as Det. Paul Falsone on Fontana's **Homicide: Life on the Street** *(NBC, Fridays, 10–11 p.m.)*. A transfer from the car-theft division, Falsone has rubbed most of his new squad the wrong way, yet Seda's energy is invigorating. He can hold his own with Andre Braugher, who blows most actors right off the screen.

PATRICIA HEATON Stuck behind a couch for much of last season in an attempt to hide her pregnancy, Heaton has stepped into the spotlight this fall as Ray Romano's feisty and long-suffering wife, Debra, on **Everybody Loves Raymond** *(CBS, Mondays, 8:30–9 p.m.)*. None of Heaton's previous TV roles (among them: Jennifer Love Hewitt's crabby birth mom on *Party of Five*) could have prepared us for her newfound comic virtuosity. *Everybody Loves Debra*, anyone?

WALTER MCBRIDE/RETNA

WINNER OF THE WEEK

Connie Chung

The former *CBS Evening News* coanchor finally got some good career news: ABC just signed her up (reportedly for $1 million plus per year) to be a correspondent and substitute anchor for such shows as *PrimeTime Live* and *20/20*.

LOSER OF THE WEEK

Michael Landes

He got replaced as Jimmy Olsen after the first season of ABC's *Lois & Clark* in 1994. Now he's prematurely exiting NBC's sitcom *Union Square*, making him a two-time loser.

SOUND BITES

"Five days? But I'm mad *now*!" HOMER SIMPSON, complaining about the waiting period to purchase a gun, on *The Simpsons*

"Just be yourself. But not too much." MONICA (COURTENEY COX), advising Chandler (Matthew Perry) on how to pick up a girl, on *Friends*

"I may be old-fashioned, but I don't think a woman should *ever* call." PAIGE (JOELY FISHER), during a debate about whether Ellen (Ellen DeGeneres) should call a woman she'd met, on *Ellen*

"Donald Trump came out okay.... He doesn't have much money invested in the stock market per se. Most of his money goes into junk blonds." DAVID LETTERMAN on *Late Show*

THE RATINGS

'CINDERELLA' STORY

THAT GLASS slipper fit ABC like a glove—*Cinderella* easily beat the stiff sweeps competition, attracting 34.3 million viewers and giving the Alphabet its best Sunday-night numbers in over 10 years. The princess' momentum helped Oprah, too; *Before Women Had Wings* came in fourth. Actually, all the nets posted big numbers—Fox's *The X-Files* (5th) got its second-highest rating ever, CBS' *Murder, She Wrote* movie (13th) was lively enough—except NBC; *House of Frankenstein 1997* (32nd) was a ratings nightmare. The net even took a hit on Thursday; both *Seinfeld* (2nd) and *ER* (3rd) were down from their season averages. But the Peacock did have Tuesday to crow about: *Frasier* (9th) scored a victory over *Home Improvement* (12th) for the first time, and *Just Shoot Me* (16th) crushed *Hiller and Diller* (44th).

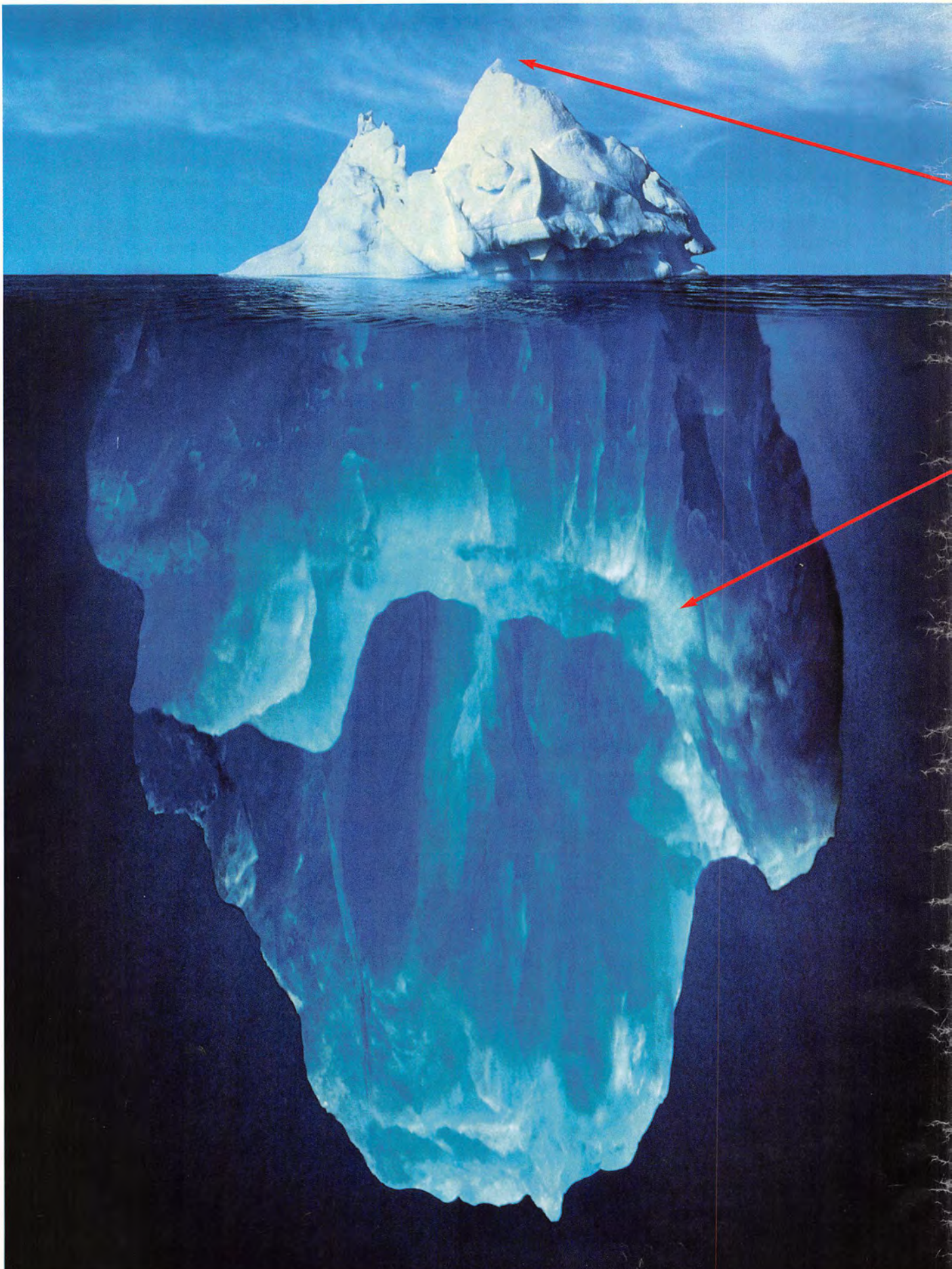
CROWN JEWEL: ABC's Brandy came out on top

TOP 30

	VIEWERS*		LAST WEEK
1	34.3	**RODGERS & HAMMERSTEIN'S CINDERELLA** ABC, *Sunday, 7 p.m.*	—
2	30.2	**SEINFELD** NBC, *Thursday, 9 p.m.*	—
3	29.2	**ER** NBC, *Thursday, 10 p.m.*	—
4	28.1	**MOVIE: BEFORE WOMEN HAD WINGS** ABC, *Sunday, 9 p.m.*	—
5	27.3	**THE X-FILES** Fox, *Sunday, 9 p.m.*	26
6	25.0	**VERONICA'S CLOSET** NBC, *Thursday, 9:30 p.m.*	—
7	24.4	**FRIENDS** NBC, *Thursday, 8 p.m.*	—
8	22.3	**TOUCHED BY AN ANGEL** CBS, *Sunday, 8 p.m.*	6
9	20.7	**FRASIER** NBC, *Tuesday, 9 p.m.*	—
10	19.6	**KING OF THE HILL** Fox, *Sunday, 8:30 p.m.*	11
11	19.3	**UNION SQUARE** NBC, *Thursday, 8:30 p.m.*	—
12	19.2	**HOME IMPROVEMENT** ABC, *Tuesday, 9 p.m.*	10
13	18.6	**MOVIE: MURDER, SHE WROTE—SOUTH BY SOUTHWEST** CBS, *Sunday, 9 p.m.*	—
	18.6	**60 MINUTES** CBS, *Sunday, 7 p.m.*	8
15	18.0	**THE SIMPSONS** Fox, *Sunday, 8 p.m.*	9
16	17.2	**JUST SHOOT ME** NBC, *Tuesday, 9:30 p.m.*	—
17	17.0	**MAD ABOUT YOU** NBC, *Tuesday, 8 p.m.*	—
18	16.7	**PRIMETIME LIVE** ABC, *Wednesday, 10 p.m.*	20
19	16.5	**DATELINE NBC** NBC, *Tuesday, 10 p.m.*	—
20	16.4	**COSBY** CBS, *Monday, 8 p.m.*	18
21	16.2	**THE DREW CAREY SHOW** ABC, *Wednesday, 9 p.m.*	13
22	15.5	**PROMISED LAND** CBS, *Thursday, 8 p.m.*	28
23	15.3	**NYPD BLUE** ABC, *Tuesday, 10 p.m.*	—
24	15.1	**WALKER, TEXAS RANGER** CBS, *Saturday, 10 p.m.*	27
25	15.0	**DHARMA & GREG** ABC, *Wednesday, 8:30 p.m.*	24
	15.0	**20/20** ABC, *Friday, 10 p.m.*	15
27	14.9	**3RD ROCK FROM THE SUN** NBC, *Wednesday, 9 p.m.*	—
	14.9	**DIAGNOSIS MURDER** CBS, *Thursday, 9 p.m.*	18
29	14.8	**NEWSRADIO** NBC, *Tuesday, 8:30 p.m.*	—
30	14.7	**JAG** CBS, *Tuesday, 8 p.m.*	35

*IN MILLIONS WEEK OF OCT. 27–NOV. 2, 1997 SOURCE: NIELSEN MEDIA RESEARCH

NEIL PRESTON



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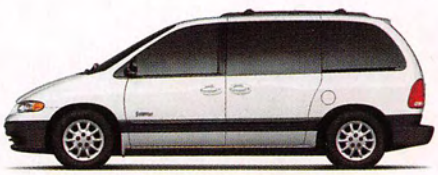

Plymouth Voyager

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WEDNESDAY NIGHT AT THE ORIGINALS

Stephen Baldwin, Gabrielle Anwar and Tom Conti

"Sub Down"

Wednesday, November 19 at 9pm/8c

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WHAT to WATCH

A day-to-day guide to notable programs. Times are Eastern standard and are subject to change.

MONDAY

November 10

STAR TREK FIRST!

SYNDICATED*
STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE Wrap up those high-tech toasters—Worf and Dax get hitched in the *Trek* franchise's first marriage of series regulars.
*CHECK LOCAL LISTINGS

8–9PM
PENN & TELLER'S HOME INVASION MAGIC (ABC, TV-PG) The bad boys of magic hit the road. *Drew Carey*'s Kathy Kinney, Christa Miller, and the Drew-meister himself add celebrity heft to the proceedings.

9–10PM
BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER (The WB, TV-PG) A demon Giles conjured in college initiates a potentially deadly reunion.

9–10PM
ALLY McBEAL (Fox, TV-14-D) The ever-malleable Sandra Bernhard guest-stars as an obnoxious lawyer.

9:30–10PM
THE NAKED TRUTH (NBC, TV-PG) A cameoing John Tesh throws a mid-flight tantrum when he's put in coach while Nora rides first-class.

10–11PM
BROOKLYN SOUTH (CBS, TV-14-LV) The precinct deals with a gay-bashing officer.

8–8:30PM
COSBY (CBS, TV-G) Shades of William Shatner's legendary *Twilight Zone* turn, "Nightmare at 20,000 Feet." As Jack, a delirious airplane passenger, the former Captain Kirk complicates life for Hilton (Bill Cosby with Shatner, right), who's struggling to get a plane-phobic Griffin to a gig on time. "I had a hilarious time," says Shatner of his latest sitcom stint. So how did this foray into comedy differ from, say, *Star Trek*? "You get laughs in the drama and tears in the comedy," he says. Some might call that highly illogical.

CAPTAIN QUIRK?

ALAN SINGER

TUESDAY

November 11

8–9PM
I REMEMBER (CBS Eye On People, TV-PG) "It was my first story for CBS News," says veteran newscaster Lesley Stahl of the Watergate scandal. In this premiere of the cable network's documentary series, Stahl, Dan Rather, Bob Schieffer, and Fred Graham look at how Watergate shaped the country and themselves. "It made me very skeptical as a reporter and as a person," says Stahl. "But it also completely restored my faith in [the ability of the] American form of democracy to cleanse itself."

8:45–11AM
SO PROUDLY WE HAIL! (American Movie Classics) The 1943 World War II flick kicks off a Veterans Day marathon that includes *The Best Years of Our Lives* (1946), *The Young Lions* (1958), *Battle Cry* (1955), and *Von Ryan's Express* (1965).

STAHL TACTICS

CRAIG BLANKENHORN

8:30–9PM
NEWSRADIO (NBC, TV-PG) Efficiency expert Andrea *is* getting tiresome, but it's fun to see Dave seethe when she hands Lisa a promotion.

100TH EPISODE

9–9:30PM
FRASIER (NBC, TV-PG) A milestone inside a milestone: The sitcom's centennial finds Frasier planning a fete for his 1,000th radio show.

10–11PM
NYPD BLUE (ABC, TV-14-LSV) The boys suspect a man who seems too eager to collect on his dead wife and son's insurance policy.

The Guest List

Look Who's on The Couch This Week
(SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

CINDY CRAWFORD

CONAN O'BRIEN **Monday** Jay Mohr, Charles Dutton (R) **Tuesday** Francis Ford Coppola, musical guests Green Day **Wednesday** Matt Lauer, Lisa Rinna, author James Ellroy **Thursday** Peter Gallagher **Friday** Bill Murray, musical guest Patti Smith

ROSIE O'DONNELL **Monday** Bob Denver, musical guest Harry Connick Jr. **Tuesday** Wesley Snipes, Naomi Judd, musical guest Michael Bolton **Wednesday** Musical guests the Sugarbeats with Carole King **Thursday** Claire Danes, musical guest Aretha Franklin **Friday** Bill Cosby, Ally Walker

LATER **Monday** Lisa Rinna **Tuesday** L.A. Laker Kobe Bryant **Wednesday** Neil Patrick Harris **Thursday** Comedian Howie Mandel

DAVID LETTERMAN **Monday** Wesley Snipes, Naomi Judd **Tuesday** Claire Danes, musical guest Lorrie Morgan **Wednesday** Marv Albert, musical guest John Fogerty **Thursday** Bill Murray, Alison Eastwood, musical guests matchbox 20 **Friday** Don Rickles, Heather Graham

JAY LENO **Monday** Drew Carey, *Red Corner*'s Bai Ling **Tuesday** Vanessa L. Williams **Wednesday** Dustin Hoffman, Tim Russert **Thursday** Cindy Crawford, Denis Leary

THE VIEW **Monday** Donald Trump **Tuesday** Ving Rhames **Wednesday** Rosie O'Donnell, Naomi Judd **Thursday** Christopher and Dana Reeve **Friday** Wesley Snipes, Anita Hill

ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID COWLES

WHAT TO WATCH

WEDNESDAY November 12

8:30–9PM
DHARMA & GREG (ABC, TV-PG-DL) D&G's backseat tryst in the nation's capital becomes a cause célèbre. Speaking of celebs, *Politically Incorrect*'s Bill Maher guest-stars.

FULL MONTY TIME!

9–9:30PM
THE DREW CAREY SHOW (ABC) Where's letterboxed television when we need it? Drew, Oswald, and Lewis decide to take it all off to raise some fast cash.

9–10PM
PARTY OF FIVE (Fox, TV-PG) Those Salingers just can't catch a break: Charlie hosts a wedding bash for Julia, which ends with her having serious doubts about her new husband.

9:30–10PM
WORKING (NBC, TV-14) After he and his coworkers attend a sexual-harassment seminar, Matt gets a tad sheepish about asking out a foxy colleague.

10–11PM
PRIMETIME LIVE (ABC) Jay Schadler has an exclusive in-jail chat with Luke Woodham, the teen whose slaying spree at his Pearl, Miss., high school made front-page news in October.

10–11PM
LAW & ORDER (NBC, TV-14) Hoping to land another sweeps windfall, NBC again teams the *L&O* gang, including Benjamin Bratt, (far left) and Jerry Orbach (right) with the dicks from *Homicide: Life on the Street* (the squads combined forces on a New York subway gas bombing case in 1996). This time toxic shock syndrome and possible sexual abuse figure into the death of a 14-year-old fashion model. The two-parter concludes on *Homicide*, Nov. 14.

CROSSING GUARDS

JESSICA BURSTEIN

BRUCE Z. HERMAN

OUT *HOUSE*: Ellen DeGeneres (above left, with Mary Page Keller) has this sitcom skeleton in her closet

Choice Reruns

BEFORE SHE BECAME THE CRUSADING queen of prime time, Ellen DeGeneres cut her sitcom teeth on **Open House** (1989–90; TV Land, Nov. 16, 11–11:30 a.m.), a Fox spin-off of sorts from its failed romantic comedy *Duet*. Set in a California real estate agency, it costarred DeGeneres as Margo, a spacey—and decidedly hetero—receptionist with a very bad haircut. Although it's Margo's excessive distress over the death of her cat, not her sexuality, that provides the focus for this episode of the underwhelming *House*, the before-they-were-stars peek does make for a curious novelty. And there's not a parental advisory in sight.—*Mike Flaherty*

THURSDAY November 13

7:15PM–2AM
STARRING PAM GRIER (The Movie Channel) The blaxploitation queen—and *Jackie Brown* costar—is feted in a mini film-fest including *Above the Law* (1988), *Original Gangstas* (1996), *Coffy* (1973), and *Class of 1999* (1990).

8–8:30PM
FRIENDS (NBC, TV-PG) Lovestruck Chandler gets in deeper when his infatuation with Joey's girlfriend, Kathy, results in a passionate kiss.

8–9PM
NOTHING SACRED (ABC) Father Ray comes to the aid of a boy who's been hospitalized for speaking in tongues.

TONY ESPARZA

LIFE AFTER *MELROSE*?

9–9:30PM
SEINFELD (NBC, TV-PG) One day you're a brain-damaged hellion on *Melrose Place*, the next you're a woman smart enough to remain unfazed by Jerry's showbiz flash. That's right, Marcia Cross (*MP*'s Kimberly) guest-stars.

9–10PM
CRACKER (ABC) A talk-radio host is stalked, while Fitz discovers that his estranged wife is dating their marriage counselor.

9:30–10PM
VERONICA'S CLOSET (NBC, TV-PG) Ronnie decides it's no time for realism when a toy company decides to make a doll in her image.

10–11PM
ER (NBC, TV-PG) Greene tags along for an emotional journey with Ross, who's driving to California to mourn his dad's death.

IT'S BACK!

10–11PM
UNSOLVED MYSTERIES (CBS, TV-PG-L) The whodunit series returns (to a new network) with a look at whether Elvis may have committed suicide.

KILLER CAMEOS

9–10PM
DIAGNOSIS MURDER (CBS) We don't often (okay, ever) highlight the work of the stethoscope-clutching sleuth (Dick Van Dyke, above center), but this sweeps-month stunt proved too tantalizing. The good doctor investigates a CIA agent's death and finds himself in the company of a quartet of TV spies of yesteryear. From left, Barbara Bain (*Mission: Impossible*), Patrick Macnee (*The Avengers*), Robert Culp (*I Spy*), and Robert Vaughn (*The Man from U.N.C.L.E.*) guest-star.

FRIDAY November 14

CABLE PREMIERE

8–10PM
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S ROMEO & JULIET (Cinemax, PG-13) TV, street gangs, Leonardo DiCaprio, and Claire Danes all figure into the bizarre 1996 riff on the Bard's classic. Whether you deem it screwball success or interesting failure, one thing's forsooth: You've never seen anything like it.

ARMANDO GALLO/RETNA

PEOPLE WHO NEED PEOPLE

10–11PM
20/20 (ABC) Everyone's favorite diva Barbra Streisand plugs her latest album, *Higher Ground*, as well as her relationship with fiancé James Brolin in an exclusive chat with Barbara Walters.

8–8:30PM
SABRINA, THE TEENAGE WITCH (ABC, TV-G) It's not exactly *Boogie Nights*, but the ex–Mrs. Burt Reynolds, Loni Anderson, guests as one of Sabrina's hillbilly cousins.

9–10PM
MILLENNIUM (Fox, TV-PG-V) Road trip! Frank, Watts, and Andrews (*ER*'s CCH Pounder) travel to Germany to divine the origins of the Group.

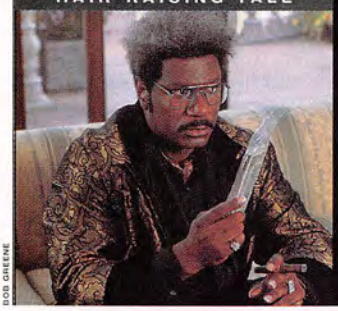
9:30–10PM
THE GREGORY HINES SHOW (CBS, TV-G) Matty breaks up with his girlfriend, but it's Ben who's heartbroken when he finds out his kid confided the news to Uncle Carl first.

SATURDAY November 15

9–11PM
THE 19TH ANNUAL CABLE ACE AWARDS (TNT) David Hyde Pierce and Sela Ward host the live ceremony in which the cable nets say "Bravo" (and Showtime and HBO...) to the best non-network TV fare.

10–11PM
DENIS LEARY: LOCK 'N LOAD (HBO, TV-MA) It's never a good sign when edgy stand-ups start riffing on parenthood. Luckily, lots of other things also get Leary's Irish up in this New York gig.

HAIR-RAISING TALE



BOB GREENE

8–10PM
DON KING: ONLY IN AMERICA (HBO) As boxing ultra-promoter King, Ving Rhames gives a grandly energetic, profane performance. Kario Salem's exciting, comically operatic script revels in King's violent past and strong-arm business hustles: The movie is gleefully pro-Don without letting him off the hook as a shrewd bloodsucker, and Rhames conveys King's ebullient charm. The year's best-supporting cast includes a finely tuned performance by *Chicago Hope*'s Vondie Curtis Hall as R&B singer Lloyd Price (credited here with creating King's trademark nimbus hairdo). And watch for the movie's hilarious attack on HBO itself. **A** —*KT*

WHAT TO WATCH

SUNDAY November 16

6–8PM
FLOOD: A RIVER'S RAMPAGE (The Family Channel, TV-PG) Hallmark Entertainment presents the Richard Thomas flick about the repercussions from the 1993 uprising of the mighty Mississippi.

7–9PM
THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF DISNEY (ABC, TV-G) Disney does Dickens with a new adaptation of *Oliver Twist* starring a grizzly Richard Dreyfuss as king of the pickpockets Fagin and Elijah Wood as the Artful Dodger. True to Hollywood tradition, Disney's gone with a newcomer, Alex Trench, to play the title waif.

8–8:30PM
THE SIMPSONS (Fox, TV-PG-L) Under pressure from his mom to wed, Apu sets out to convince her he is already married—to Marge.

8–9PM*
NATURE: THE ELEPHANTS OF AFRICA (PBS) Expert Cynthia Moss traveled from savannah to desert to forest to mountainside to look at the diverse habitats of Dark Continent pachyderms.
*CHECK LOCAL LISTINGS

8–9PM
RAY COMBS: THE E! TRUE HOLLYWOOD STORY (E!) Family and friends offer insight into the turbulent life and early death (by suicide) of the *Family Feud* host.

8–9PM
THE ULTIMATE GUIDE: WHALES (Discovery Channel, TV-G) In case you came away wanting more after watching a *pen*ultimate guide to the great mammals (yes, for the last time, they're mammals), try this comprehensive look.

CHRIS HELCERMANAS-BENOIT

A PRIME-TIME CONSPIRACY

9–10PM
THE X-FILES (Fox, TV-PG-LV) "I don't want to tip too much of the story because it's so good," says *X-Files* guest star Richard Belzer (above right), sounding a bit like cryptic series creator Chris Carter. This much is certain: During a flashback to 1989, one of the three Lone Gunmen (jailed above) winds up in the interrogation room with Belzer's *Homicide* character, Det. John Munch. For his part, Belzer couldn't be happier with his entrée into the world of paranormal TV. "They had a chair for me with the *X-Files* logo and my name on it, and they gave me T-shirts," says Belzer, who makes a dramatic hat trick this week with a role on *Law & Order* as well as his usual *Homicide* stint. "I was just like a fan who happened to be an actor."

BOB GREENE

LADY KILLERS

8:30–9PM
KING OF THE HILL (Fox, TV-PG) Fed up with the noise being made by the local garage band (guest-voice alt-rockers Green Day), Hank and buddies challenge the musicians to a game of paint ball.

8:30–11PM
BATMAN FOREVER (NBC, TV-PG) Though the franchise seems to have grown colder than Mr. Freeze at the box office, the Peacock net is betting that the 1995 *Batman* installment (with Val Kilmer as the Caped Crusader) will help heat up its sweeps-month ratings.

9–11PM
MEDUSA'S CHILD (ABC, TV-PG-LSV) A race against time ensues when a nuclear warhead aboard a cargo plane suddenly starts ticking. Martin Sheen, Christopher Noth, Vincent Spano, Lori Loughlin, Gail O'Grady, and Kevin Dillon star in the two-part movie based on John J. Nance's novel. (Concludes Nov. 20)

9–10PM
INSIDE THE ACTORS STUDIO: HARVEY KEITEL (Bravo, TV-PG) The eternally nude film star has gotten a lot of ink lately because of his nakedly vicious custody battle with his ex Lorraine Bracco, but tonight, thankfully, Keitel is asked only to bare his thespian soul.

9–11PM
BELLA MAFIA (CBS, TV-14-LSV) It's the Girl Power version of *The Last Don*! Four seemingly mismatched actresses—Vanessa Redgrave (above left, with Gina Philips), Jennifer Tilly, Illeana Douglas, and Nastassja Kinski—mesh delightfully as a gaggle of Mafia wives united to avenge their murdered husbands. A refined script that eschews typical miniseries self-indulgence lets each actress stand out in different ways—Tilly with jiggle, Redgrave with dignity, Kinski with beauty, Douglas with smarts. It's equal opportunity Mob entertainment. (Concludes Nov. 18) **B+** *—Kristen Baldwin*

9–11PM
ON THE BRINK: DOOMSDAY (TLC, TV-PG) The documentary uncovers a host of Cold War contretemps that brought the world perilously close to nuclear holocaust. *Now* they tell us.

10:30PM–2AM
DOCTOR ZHIVAGO (Turner Classic Movies, TV-PG) TCM wraps up its "Around the World in 30 Movies" week with a screening of David Lean's epic Russian love story.

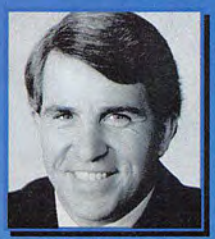
From Washington--
Watch the *REAL* Power Players!

Scheduled to appear:

Wolf Blitzer
CNN Reporter

Tom Clancy
Author

Catherine Crier
FOX News



Jack Ford
NBC News

Al Franken
Political Humorist

Arianna Huffington
Radio Host, "Left, Right & Center"

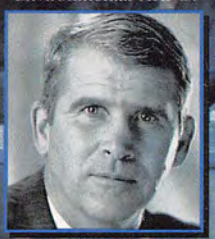
Jesse L. Jackson, Jr.
U.S. Congressman

Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.
Environmental Activist

Bill Maher
Host, "Politically Incorrect"

Andrea Mitchell
NBC Correspondent

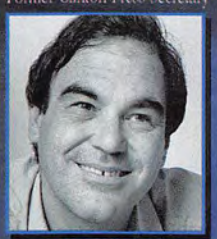
Dee Dee Myers
Former Clinton Press Secretary



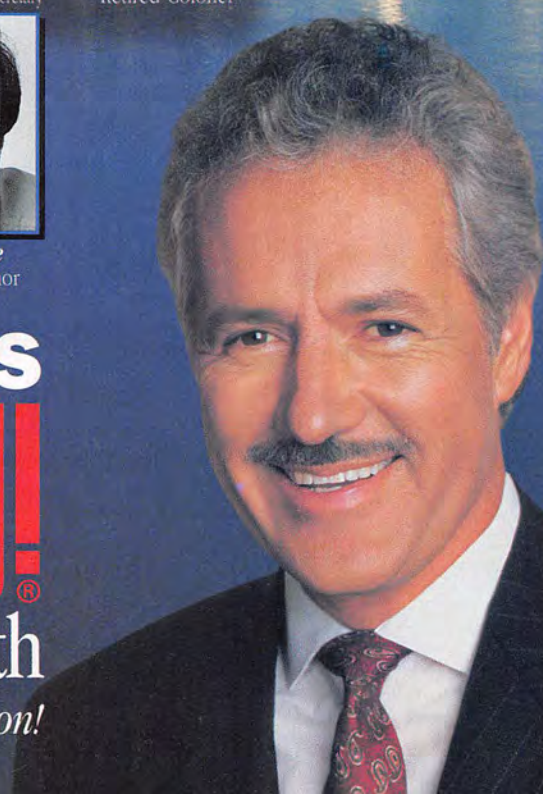
Oliver North
Retired Colonel

Tim Russert
Host, "Meet The Press"

Pat Schroeder
Former Congresswoman



Oliver Stone
Filmmaker/Author



POWER PLAYERS
JEOPARDY!®

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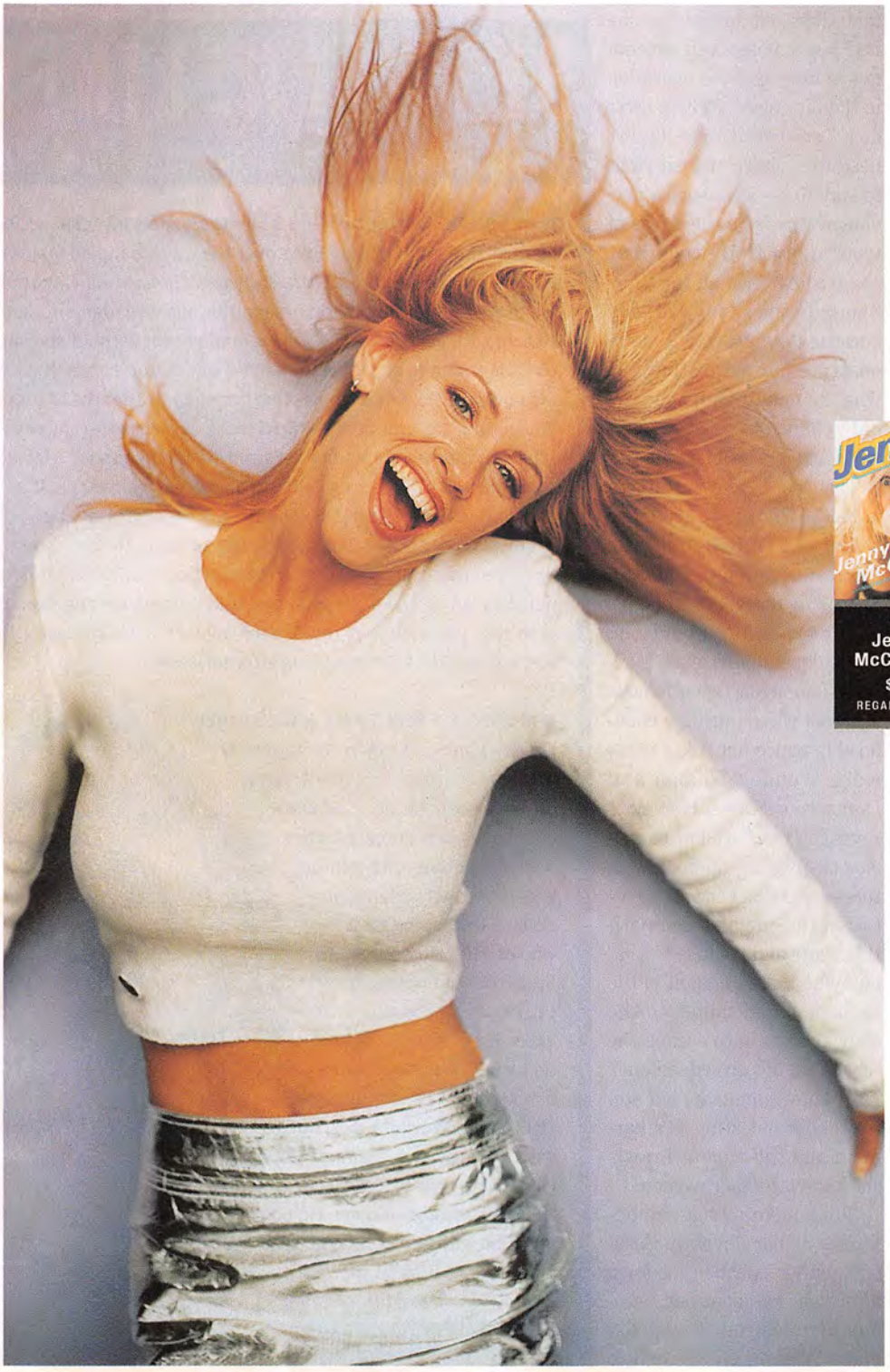
December 1, 1997

A Jenny Tonic

Put those negative preconceptions on ice. *JEN-X: Jenny McCarthy's Open Book* turns out to be a refreshingly candid memoir that leaves no mortifying moment unbared. Drink up! by Dana Kennedy



JON RAGEL/OUTLINE

IN 2097, IF STUDENTS ARE still taking a course called "The Literature of Fact," now taught by John McPhee at Princeton, **JEN-X: Jenny McCarthy's Open Book** should be required reading. Nothing else could offer such a pure snapshot of a working-class young woman in celebrity-obsessed, turn-of-the-century America.

Okay, that was probably not the blurb envisioned by the canny marketers—I mean publishers—over at Regan Books when they packaged—I mean crafted—what they no doubt hoped would be a female version of Howard Stern's mega-selling *Private Parts*. Complete with the same kind of loud magazine and MTV-style graphics and cute baby pictures, *JEN-X*, cowritten by freelance writer Neal Karlen, even chronicles McCarthy's Stern-like obsession with...farting.

But get this: *JEN-X* actually cuts through the cheese it seemed destined to be and emerges as a little gem of a memoir—far more honest and believable in its crude way than the fussily executed, self-conscious recollections of highbrow books like Kathryn Harrison's *The Kiss* or Mary Karr's *The Liar's Club*. Freed from the constraints of anything but the desire to *sell this book*, Regan and Co. have accidentally produced a witty, inspirational story that is both a classic piece of pop-culture ephemera and a grand record of it.

At its heart, *JEN-X* works because McCarthy, the tough, determined daughter of a Chicago steelworker, tells the truth about being a woman—about being ambitious, lonely, jealous of other women; about being used by men *and* using men. "Those men whose un-

NEW IN PAPERBACK

BLUE ITALIAN Rita Ciresi (Delta, $11.95, first published in 1996) Fiction debut flashbacks over a couple's bumpy three-year marriage with biting humor, tactile prose, and a three-hankie finale.

MARCHING TO VALHALLA Michael Blake (Fawcett/Columbine, $12.95, 1996) General Custer narrates the final months of his life in this measured historical epic from the author of *Dances With Wolves*.

A PLACE CALLED HOME Mickey Pearlman, ed. (St. Martin's Griffin, $12.95, 1996) Erica Jong and 19 other women reflect on the domicile; their true home is, clearly, on the page.

LE DIVORCE Diane Johnson (Plume, $12.95, 1996) This witty novel about an American's visit to her stepsister in Paris is a current National Book Award nominee.

funny jokes I laughed at and who I flattered with my attention were all fools," writes McCarthy about her stint as *Playboy*'s Playmate of the Year. "...This was the game I had to play for a while to get in the club." And her frankness about matters involving personal hygiene—which I won't even begin to describe here—are at times gross and disturbing, rare for a woman, and reminiscent of some of Sylvia Plath's jarring ruminations on similar subjects.

Smartly self-deprecating, again in the fine Stern tradition, the book is an instant antidote to every airbrushed profile of a *Cosmopolitan* cover girl. Merrily describing herself as a "friendless geek," McCarthy tells us right up front that she hates her breast implants. She says she plans to take them out and wishes she had had enough self-esteem not to have had the operation in the first place. ("Girls, don't do it," she warns.) She doesn't need to exercise and eat right to stay thin—she's such a nervous wreck from the stress of working in Hollywood that she has diarrhea all the time. She didn't pose for *Playboy* because it was a way to demonstrate her art; rather, "It was the only way, maybe my only chance to get to Hollywood and in front of a camera."

That spot before the camera is McCarthy's holy grail, her ticket out from behind the counter of a deli in Chicago. McCarthy doesn't pretend it's about craft; it's about the "ridiculous daydreams I'd always had about being famous in a cool way," during a childhood in which her role models were Wonder Woman and Donny and Marie. Her most revealing tales are her memories of growing up poor with three sisters on Chicago's gritty South Side as a competitive, "lost and confused" tomboy who locked herself in the bathroom and talked to the shower curtain to escape the "chaos" of her crowded home. Most entertaining are her stories about her stint as a barmaid and the violent brawls she had with other women.

She laments what she describes as her devoutly Catholic mother's near breakdown after hearing about her *Playboy* pictorial but coolly explains it as a risk she had to take. "It had to be a stepping stone," says McCarthy, who now vows never to pose nude again. "You rolls the dice, you takes your chances."

McCarthy's adventures in Hollywood—breakfasting with Hugh Hefner's spoiled sons at the Playboy mansion, fending off a lecherous Steven Seagal, feuding with Pamela Lee, mistakenly wearing her Valentino dress backward at the Oscars—are the kind of hilarious stories most careerist starlets would rather die than disclose.

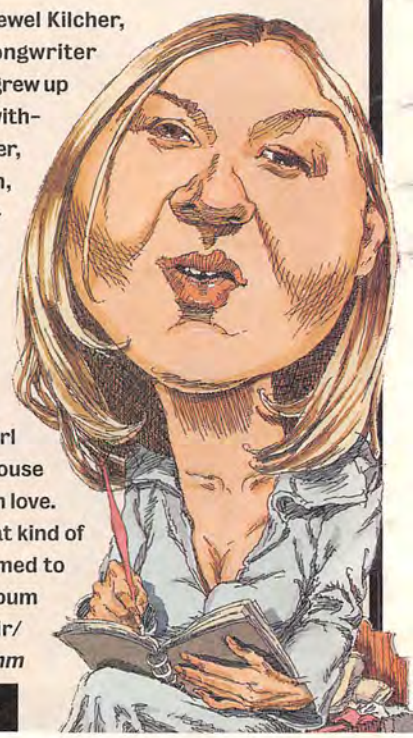
Maybe you won't believe the grade this book is getting. As McCarthy herself says: Whatever. Bite me. **A**

BETWEEN THE LINES

The inside scoop on the book world

■ ***REBEL*** **YELL** Critic **Armond White** is considering legal action against Thunder's Mouth Press over the way it handled his just-published *Rebel for the Hell of It: The Life of Tupac Shakur*. According to White, the company shortened his acknowledgments section and added its own, revised his manuscript without showing him the changes, and inserted a five-page Editor's Note that the author says "forces a connection between the deaths of **Tupac Shakur** and **Biggie Smalls**—which I took pains not to do and which I think reinforces certain racist stereotypes." Thunder's Mouth publisher **Neil Ortenberg** says his actions were the result of a contentious editing process that began when White—who had promised to write an instant bio—instead turned in a book heavy on critical analysis and light on information. Though Ortenberg has offered to make the changes White wants for the second printing, the author plans to seek legal redress through the Authors Guild, which is looking into the issue.

■ **MUSIC TO HER EARS** Jewel Kilcher, the 23-year-old singer-songwriter better known as **Jewel**, who grew up on an Alaskan homestead without television or running water, has just made a $2 million, two-book deal with HarperCollins. In keeping with the wholesome tenor of Jewel's multiplatinum-selling debut CD, *Pieces of You*, the first book, due in June '98, will be an as yet untitled volume of poetry. "They're typical girl stuff," an editor at a rival house says of the poems. "Falling in love. Wanting to ride a horse. That kind of thing." The second book, timed to coincide with her second album next fall, will be a memoir/scrapbook. —*Matthew Flamm*



PIECES **OF HER: Jewel as author**

ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN CUNEO

Wish child Andrew and brother

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The Week

Nonfiction

RETROSPECTIVE Cindy Sherman *(Thames & Hudson, $34.95)* Art-world darling Sherman started out benignly enough, dolling herself up as anonymous blowsy B-movie characters in her famed series of 69 *Untitled Film Stills*. Then this dour mannequin moved on to less subtly disturbing projects...like the occasional corpse. After a brief interval of bawdy Old Master reenactments—boom, the props took over: dolls' limbs pulled off, naughty bits mangled together pell-mell as if to say "take *that*, Jesse Helms." You might want to keep some of the provocative, unlovely stuff away from the kiddies, but it's certainly crude for thought. **B+** *—Alexandra Jacobs*

AN EMPTY LAP: ONE COUPLE'S JOURNEY TO PARENTHOOD Jill Smolowe *(Pocket Books, $23)* Who knew that the fertility problems of two Time Inc. journalists who call themselves each other's "favorite playmate" could be so engrossing? Smolowe, a freelance journalist and former TIME staffer, writes with easy intimacy about what she and her husband, Joe Treen, an assistant managing editor at PEOPLE, went through to adopt their Chinese-born daughter, Becky, now 3. Her unromanticized understanding of what it takes for two highly opinionated adults to work through some of couplehood's most stressful challenges is what gives this book its appeal. In her unlabored ability to discuss just about anything—sex, squabbles, the late-30s-and-what's-it-all-about blues of sophisticated '90s women—Smolowe makes compelling general-interest reading out of a special-interest subject. **A-** *—Lisa Schwarzbaum*

MAD: FOLD THIS BOOK! Al Jaffee *(Warner Books, $15.95)* Many a young subversive (David Letterman and Howard Stern, to name two) grew up carefully folding in the back page of *Mad* magazine to see what visual messages that nudnick illustrator Jaffee had hidden in the edges of his nasty drawings. Now 30 years' worth of Jaffee's ornery origami have been brought together in a cartoon compendium. The hallmark of these often brilliant fold-ins has always been their iconoclastic goofiness: A bald eagle folds to become that new national symbol—the Big Mac; a college job fair folds to reveal a sulking graduate moving back home. After a few dozen folds, one thing becomes clear: Jaffee's definitely a *Mad* man. **B** *—David Hochman*

KEYS TO THE CITY: TALES OF A NEW YORK CITY LOCKSMITH Joel Kostman *(DK Ink, $19.95)* Quick, screen-industry someone, batten down the rights to this (cleverly door-shaped) book! Over years of letting some people in and bolting others out, locksmith author Kostman has played hero to enough New York crazies—Eddie Cantor's cousin, age 92; a roomful of blithe, unconcerned naked men; one of his own forgetful high school teachers—to staff a dozen Woody Allen movies.

WITH A SONG IN HER ART: Wigged-out photographer/muse Cindy Sherman

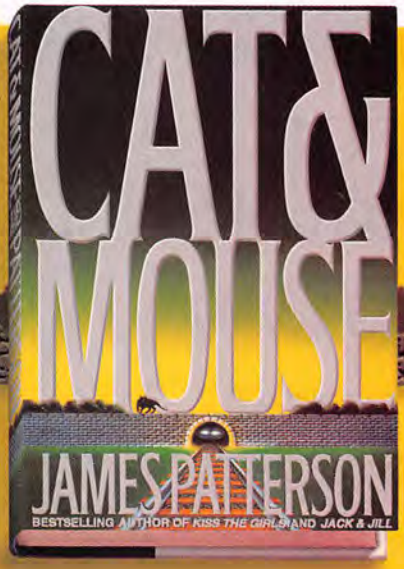
These understated episodes are by turns hilariously erotic and terribly sad. The best show wistful chinks of Kostman's own life. He's got the proverbial steel-trap mind, and if at times he might be suspected of embroidery, he should be promptly issued literary license. **A-** *—AJ*

Fiction

THE WIND-UP BIRD CHRONICLE Haruki Murakami *(Knopf, $25.95)* Toru Okada, the protagonist of this Japanese bildungsroman, is an utterly normal man to whom utterly abnormal things happen. As the book opens, he is a married thirtysomething lawyer who has recently quit his job and is in the midst of deciding what to do with his life when, in short order, his cat leaves him; an unknown woman calls up and offers phone sex; his wife, Kumiko, disappears; a pair of strange women named Malta and Creta start visiting; an old man he once knew dies and leaves him an empty box; and, in order to think, he spends some time at the bottom of a dried-up well. Sound weird? It is. And it gets weirder. Still, at heart this is an old-fashioned story of emotional growth covered with a veneer of surrealism. Toru, we're not in Tokyo anymore. **A-** *—Vanessa V. Friedman*

THE VELOCITY OF MONEY Stephen Rhodes *(Morrow, $24)* When a consortium of fabulously wealthy, amoral international financiers conspire to hurl America into a second Great Depression for their own fun and profit, the fate of the economy rests in the unlikely hands of young Wall Street attorney Rick Hansen. While pseudonymous financial-industry attorney/author Rhodes loads his impressive first novel with the requisite

CINDY SHERMAN, COURTESY THAMES & HUDSON, AND THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART, L.A., THE BARRY LOWEN COLLECTION



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LITERACY SUPERMODEL OF THE WEEK

Tina Louise

"Life is a roller coaster, but I have found that a love of reading is a grounding and exciting experience," writes *Gilligan's Island*'s Ginger in the foreword to her new childhood memoir, *Sunday*. At least it gives you something to talk about with the Professor.

thriller elements—expensive cigars, a mole, a respectable body count, and ex-KGB thugs, bugs, and wiretaps—it's the crisp dialogue, vivid description, and complex financial and technological jargon that make this novel a smart, challenging, and at times even educational read. Keep a dictionary close by—you just might need it. **A–** —*Katherine Hazelwood*

THE PERFIDIOUS PARROT Janwillem van De Wetering *(Soho Press, $22)* Detectives Grijpstra and De Gier, the less than perfect cops from Amsterdam, are as wry and eccentric as always in their 14th adventure together. Although recently retired from the Dutch police force, they still see action, thanks to the detective agency they maintain as a tax front. Equally adept at cracking cases on foreign soil and their own, Grijpstra and De Gier here traipse off to Key West and the Caribbean to solve a complicated mystery with two new sidekicks, the physically adroit Karate and Ketchup. Van De Wetering's trademarks—jazz references and Zen wisdom—pepper this quirky crime novel. **B+** —*Daneet Steffens*

THE PRESENCE John Saul *(Fawcett/Columbine, $25)* What do sick Hawaiian scuba divers, a mysterious mutant-human burial ground, an erupting Maui volcano, and a nefarious Japanese multinational corporation have in common? Saul calls the muddled, slow-in-coming answer "speculative fiction." Surely he's not also referring to speculations the reader might have, such as, Why are the characters—a pair of beautiful scientists, a dastardly Master of the Universe—little more than cardboard cutouts? And why are the suspense scenes, usually one of the author's strengths, so generic? Saul's best-seller-making presence is hardly felt in this bland effort. **C–** —*Megan Harlan*

THE BROWSER

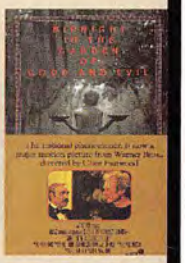
Opening lines from recently published books

"In ancient Buddhist scriptures the Himalaya are referred to as the 'storehouse of snow,' and in 1996 the storehouse was filled again and again as unusual amounts of snow fell in the mountains." From *The Climb*, an account of last year's fatal Everest expedition by mountaineer ANATOLI BOUKREEV and G. WESTON DEWALT (St. Martin's, $24.95)

"In his old cabin lighter up Caxambas Creek, Lucius Watson sat straight up in the shard of moonlight, ransacking torn dreams for the hard noise that had awakened him—that rattling *bang* of an old car or truck striking a pothole in the sandy track through the slash pine wood north of the salt creek." From the novel *Lost Man's River*, the second volume of National Book Award winner PETER MATTHIESSEN's Watson trilogy (Random House, $26.95)

BEST-SELLERS

'GARDEN' BLOOMS



THE SUN JUST won't stop shining on *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*. The colorful Savannah murder story has sprouted 2 million copies since its 1994 release, not to mention an offshoot book deal with Pocket for one of its characters, the transvestite Lady Chablis. With such fecund sales figures, don't expect the Vintage paperback anytime soon. Instead, sister imprint Random House will reap publicity from the upcoming Clint Eastwood–directed movie version by wrapping 400,000 new hardcovers with special golden mini-sleeves. The seeds of profit have been sown.

FICTION

		WEEKS ON LIST
1	**COLD MOUNTAIN** Charles Frazier, *Atlantic Monthly, $24*	19
2	**VIOLIN** Anne Rice, *Knopf, $25.95*	2
3	**THE ANGEL OF DARKNESS** Caleb Carr, *Random House, $25.95*	7
4	**FLOOD TIDE** Clive Cussler, *Simon & Schuster, $26*	6
5	**10 LB. PENALTY** Dick Francis, *Putnam, $24.95*	5
6	**TEMPLE OF THE WINDS** Terry Goodkind, *Tor, $26.95*	3
7	**THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS** Arundhati Roy, *Random House, $23*	13
8	**UNDERWORLD** Don DeLillo, *Scribner, $27.50*	7
9	**THE BEST LAID PLANS** Sidney Sheldon, *Morrow, $25*	8
10	**THE MATARASE COUNTDOWN** Robert Ludlum, *Bantam, $27.50*	2

NONFICTION

1	**DIANA: HER TRUE STORY. A COMMEMORATIVE EDITION** Andrew Morton, *Simon & Schuster, $22.95*	3
2	**THE ROYALS** Kitty Kelley, *Warner, $27*	6
3	**ANGELA'S ASHES** Frank McCourt, *Scribner, $24*	58
4	**THE MAN WHO LISTENS TO HORSES** Monty Roberts, *Random House, $23*	12
5	**INTO THIN AIR** Jon Krakauer, *Villard, $24.95*	27
6	**MIDNIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF GOOD AND EVIL** John Berendt, *Random House, $25*	142
7	**DON'T WORRY, MAKE MONEY** Richard Carlson, Ph.D., *Hyperion, $15.95*	1
8	**MEN ARE FROM MARS, WOMEN ARE FROM VENUS** John Gray, Ph.D., *HarperCollins, $25*	223
9	**CONVERSATIONS WITH GOD, BOOK I** Neale Donald Walsch, *Putnam, $19.95*	42
10	**THE PERFECT STORM** Sebastian Junger, *Norton, $23.95*	19

MASS-MARKET PAPERBACKS

1	**AIRFRAME** Michael Crichton, *Ballantine, $7.99*	3
2	**JACK & JILL** James Patterson, *Warner Vision, $7.50*	3
3	**THE CLINIC** Jonathan Kellerman, *Bantam, $6.99*	4
4	**KISS THE GIRLS** James Patterson, *Warner, $6.99*	6
5	**MY GAL SUNDAY** Mary Higgins Clark, *Pocket, $6.99*	2
6	**SILENT WITNESS** Richard North Patterson, *Ballantine, $7.99*	8
7	**THE FALLEN MAN** Tony Hillerman, *HarperPaperbacks, $6.99*	7
8	**CAUSE OF DEATH** Patricia Cornwell, *Berkley, $7.50*	11
9	**THE MACGREGOR BRIDES** Nora Roberts, *Silhouette, $6.99*	2
10	**DR. ATKINS' NEW DIET REVOLUTION** Robert C. Atkins, M.D., *Avon, $6.50*	41

SOURCE: *PUBLISHERS WEEKLY*

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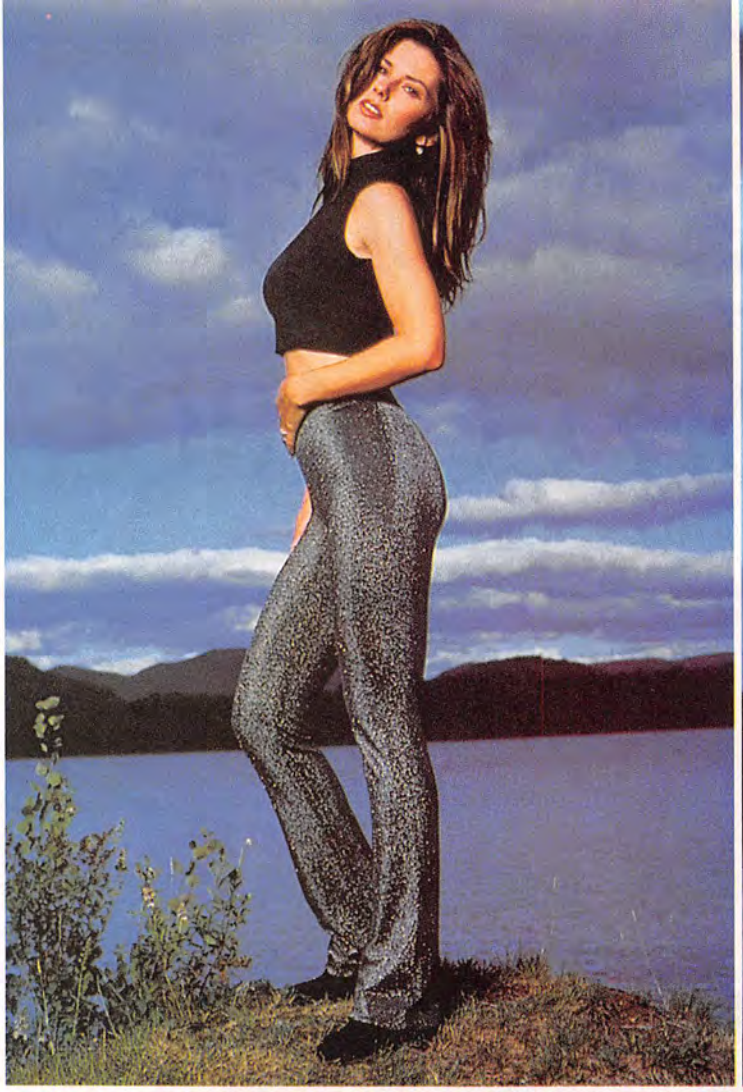


Honky-Tonk Women

Shania Twain, country-popster, gets downright down-homey on her inviting new *Come on Over*. On *The Other Side*, Wynonna abandons her country roots for clumsy blues. **by J. D. Considine**

BACK DURING THE BIG country boom of a few years ago, there was a lot of hopeful talk in Nashville circles about how the rest of the world had "gone country." For a while, there were so many cowboy hats at the top of the pop charts that it seemed only a matter of time before Garth Brooks and Reba McEntire would become crossover stars on the order of Michael Jackson and Whitney Houston.

But country's dip into the mainstream didn't go quite as swimmingly as predicted. Sure, Nashville continued to send albums into the pop top 10, but many of them—particularly those by younger stars like Wynonna—were only a little bit country and a whole lot rock & roll. With a growing fondness for boogie licks, crunchy guitars, and harmonies that owed more to the Eagles than the Jordanaires, Music Row wasn't waiting around for the mountain to come to it; instead, it had given up and gone to the mountain.

No album articulated that shift more adroitly than Shania Twain's *The Woman in Me*. Produced by album-rock vet Robert John "Mutt" Lange, it boasted the same hard-rock sheen he brought to Bryan Adams and Def Leppard, a sound that—combined with the boudoir feminism of Twain's lyrics—spoke directly to the suburban contingent of the country-music market. It may not have been the way Hank done it, but it helped *The Woman in Me* move more than 9 million copies.

URBAN COWGIRLS: Trusty Twain (left) and slim-pickin' Wynonna

Maybe that's why industry pundits expected **Come On Over** to further Twain's push into the pop market. After all, if she could sell such numbers on the strength of a few videos on CMT, imagine what she'd do with MTV behind her.

But as the title suggests, Twain would rather the mountain come on over to her. Nev-

SHANIA: GEORGE HOLZ; WYNONNA: PETER NASH/OUTLINE

er mind the "Spirit In the Sky" guitar riff growling beneath "Man! I Feel Like a Woman!" or the "We Will Rock You" beat that powers the verses in "Honey, I'm Home"—deep down, these are all country songs at heart, and that's precisely the way Twain treats them.

Shania Twain
Come On Over
MERCURY

Wynonna
The Other Side
CURB/UNIVERSAL

"Honey, I'm Home" is, in fact, a perfect example of how superficial Twain's rock trappings are. Apart from some bluesy fiddle at the beginning, the hate-my-job verses are set up like a Def Leppard single, with the drums loud, the guitars hot, and the arrangement building tension so determinedly that by the time she gets to the chorus, you halfway expect her to roar, "Pour some sugar on me...." Instead, as she announces "Honey, I'm home, and I had a hard day," the band breaks into a sweet, simple two-step, all *gitt-ar* pickin' and whining pedal steel. Though the contrast is disorienting at first, it's not hard to get the point—it may be a big, brash, rock world out there, but home is where the twang is.

That isn't the only way in which Twain maintains her down-home sensibility. Her songs are rife with Nashville puns (like "Whatever You Do! Don't!") and heartland sentimentality, and she's not above slipping into a drawl when a lyric demands. But at the same time, she's sure enough of her footing that Lange has no need to countrify every arrangement for credibility's sake. So even though her big duet with Bryan White, "From This Moment On," is as string-drenched and synth-heavy as any '80s power ballad, it seems as suited to Twain's neo-Nashville aesthetic as the high-tech honky-tonk feel of "If You Wanna Touch Her, Ask!" or the cajun-style "Love Gets Me Every Time."

Of course, it may simply be that making country music out of rock & roll is easier than trying to rock your way out of Nashville. Just look at the trouble Wynonna has trying to remake herself as a younger Bonnie Raitt with **The Other Side**.

As with Twain's album, the title tells the story. This is Wynonna's bluesy side, the one that never quite came across as she was being groomed for country stardom, and by pursuing it, she seems as determined to shed the Nashville sound as Twain is to reinvent it. Big mistake. Wynonna may be a lifelong pro, but she sings the blues like an amateur, relying more on bent-note growls than emotional credibility. It's as if she thought the advice "you gotta suffer...." was meant for the audience.

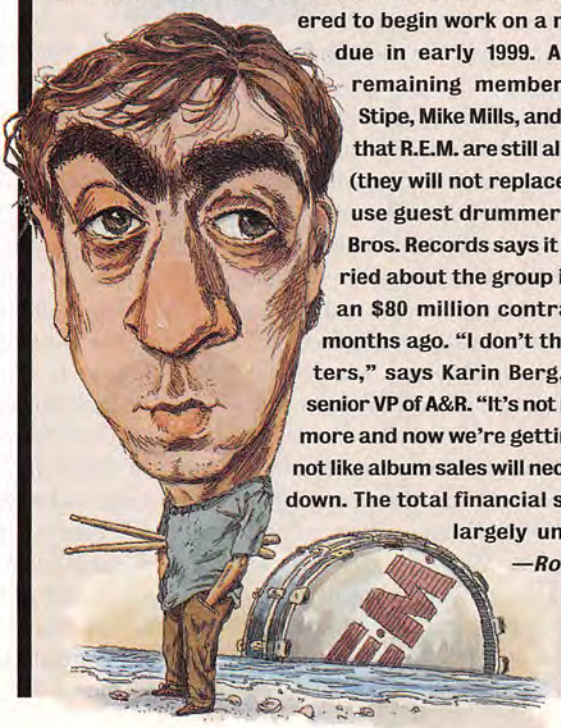
Ironically enough, the only thing keeping the album from being utterly unlistenable is the quality of the arrangements. There's enough boogie-guitar momentum to "The Other Side" and "The Wyld Unknown" to make the vocal overkill almost bearable, while Kenny Wayne Shepherd's guitar solo in "Don't You Throw That Mojo on Me" almost compensates for how laughable the song itself is. Sure, cowgirls get the blues, but as Wynonna makes plain, they don't always know what to do with them. *Come On Over:* **B+** *The Other Side:* **D**

HEAR AND NOW

This week on the music beat

■ **THE MAN WHO OWNED THE WORLD** Call him the Thin White Duke With the Fat Green Bankroll. According to London's *Business Age* magazine, David Bowie is Britain's richest rock star, with a personal fortune estimated at $917 million. Others on the magazine's rich-rockers list include Sir Paul McCartney ($868 million), Tom Jones ($460 million), Phil Collins ($367 million), Elton John ($333 million), Mick Jagger ($225 million), Eric Clapton ($200 million), George Harrison ($175 million), Sting ($161 million), and Keith Richards ($160 million). Bowie denies that he has anywhere near as much money as the magazine claims. "I could only imagine their list was compiled alphabetically," he quips. *Business Age* editor Anil Bhoyrul says the star is being disingenuous: "Between [money from] merchandising, concert revenues, royalties, and investments, he has at least that much. Of course, we don't expect him to admit it, because then the tax man would be after him." *—Tom Sinclair*

■ **BLUE BERRY** They've lost their longtime manager, their cult status, and their religion, but in a 17-year career, R.E.M. have never lost a member. Until now: Drummer Bill Berry, who says he is reevaluating his life in the wake of a brain aneurysm he suffered on tour in 1995, has quit the band. "I feel horrible about it, but it's what I feel in my heart," a tired-looking Berry told MTV on Oct. 31. The drummer informed the group of his decision three weeks earlier in Athens, Ga., where they had gathered to begin work on a new album, due in early 1999. Assured by remaining members Michael Stipe, Mike Mills, and Peter Buck that R.E.M. are still alive and well (they will not replace Berry but use guest drummers), Warner Bros. Records says it is not worried about the group it signed to an $80 million contract just 15 months ago. "I don't think it matters," says Karin Berg, Warner's senior VP of A&R. "It's not like we paid more and now we're getting less. It's not like album sales will necessarily go down. The total financial situation is largely unaffected." *—Rob Brunner*



BEATS THE RETREAT: Bill folds

ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN CUNEO

A Little 'Nights' Music

Twenty-seven-year-old director Paul Thomas Anderson didn't grow up to the superhits of the '70s, but he's built a monument to them with his *Boogie Nights* soundtrack. **by Chris Willman**

HAVING HANDPICKED 40-odd songs for the soundtrack to his pornland epic *Boogie Nights*, filmmaker Paul Thomas Anderson got nearly everything on his period-pop wish list. Only one songwriter asked to see the film before giving permission to use his tune: ELO-meister Jeff Lynne, whose "Livin' Thing" provides an *It's alive!* punchline to the scene where smut star Dirk Diggler (Mark Wahlberg) finally comes to terms with his...gift. "Jeff said, 'I have two young daughters, and I have a problem with sex and violence in movies. Should I see this?' So I screened it for him," chuckles Anderson. At the climax, rather than fleeing, Lynne leapt up, fists raised, as ELO kicked in post-prosthesis. "He said, 'I don't like sex and violence in movies, but this is the most brilliant f---in' movie ever!' "

NIGHTS STARS: Wahlberg, John C. Reilly (top); and Heather Graham with Anderson

Lynne isn't the only one who gets it. *Boogie Nights* has won acclaim for unearthing dozens of disco-era gems, which are "not only integral to the vibe of the movie," as scorer Michael Penn puts it, "but also commentary, whether it's just sort of a stupid pun or some real undercurrent of what's happening on screen."

Indeed, just as the story uses a proud porn auteur's reluctance to abandon film for videotape to symbolize the free-wheeling '70s counterculture giving way to the mercenary '80s, that changing of the guard is made musically manifest, too, in the slide from the dance fever of 1975's "You Sexy Thing" to the pop-metal portent of 1984's "Sister Christian." Though the effect is deliberate, "that was done for me," Anderson laughs. "The music *did* get worse; we didn't create that. It's like, I'm making a movie from '77 to '84, gotta be time accurate and specific...and, oh, here's this Night Ranger song."

He can wax defensive when critics tar all the nightclub selections in the early scenes with the D-word. "Maybe people think it's disco because you're in a discotheque, but the Emotions' 'Best of My Love,' to me, it's a *soul* song—like a Supremes song, but in 1977."

The 27-year-old director discovered most of his Me Decade faves—from Marvin Gaye to the Move—late in life. But Rick Springfield's 1981 "Jessie's Girl" "meant something to me at the time. I was 13 and had a crush on a girl. I like that I can look at Mark in that scene and hear 'Jessie's Girl' and be selfish and personal about my attachment to it." But "this wonderful little love song" is ironic counterpoint in a violent third-act scene where Diggler, down-and-out, peddles fake drugs to gun-toting cokeheads. "Here's this f---ing jacka-- who was the kid next door, who should have been dealing with *that*—wishing he had Jessie's girl—but instead he's selling baking soda."

Anderson's reasons for featuring Night Ranger's signature song in the same sequence were less personal, more practical. "Come on! That much porno and cocaine is *gonna* lead to 'Sister Christian.' But I dig that song. There's a cheesy, ridiculous quality to it, but you can tell that Night Ranger buy it—and that's all I'd ever want." If *Boogie* and its recently released 14-cut soundtrack are bound to afford the power ballad a revival, he's unrepentant: "If I can reach just one person with the 'Sister Christian' message, then I'll have done my job." ■

WAHLBERG AND REILLY; GRAHAM AND ANDERSON: LEFKOWITZ/NEW LINE; ALBUM: RICHARD MITCHELL

What Unearth?

Stardom brings many things. For Meredith Brooks and No Doubt it's dubious discs from the vault.

CALL IT CASH-IN SYNDROME: No sooner has a musician gone platinum than old, unheralded recordings suddenly appear. Such is the case with No Doubt and Meredith Brooks, who return with new—or not-so-new—albums.

In 1995, No Doubt's future truly was in doubt: Their first album, 1992's *No Doubt*, was a flop, and their label, Interscope, had just rejected their latest batch of songs. The band ultimately released those recordings, **The Beacon Street Collection**, on their own indie label. Now that Gwen Stefani and the boys are stars, *Beacon Street* has been reissued by Interscope. (Sweet revenge, anyone?) For those who wonder why No Doubt were ever labeled ska, the album fills in the gaps. With its reggae frat-house grooves and perky horns, it's more focused than *Tragic Kingdom*, and the factors that would pay off for them—Stefani's feisty Kewpie-doll wail, a knack for swaying ballads ("By the Way")—are in evidence. Although the songs are underwritten and overarranged, the band's spirit is willing; no wonder success was only one hook away.

STEFANI: KELLY A. SWIFT/RETNA; BROOKS: TODD KAPLAN/STAR FILE

SONG BIRDS OF YOUTH: No Doubt's Stefani (left) and a bitchin' Brooks

Brooks' album is another kettle of dish entirely. Before she was a contrived Alanis Morissette wannabe, Brooks was, apparently, a contrived teen-idol wannabe. Recorded in 1984 and previously released only in Europe, **See It Through My Eyes** *(ULG)* is the spandex-clad skeleton in her closet. The songs are blatant rip-offs of '80s hits ("Jessica" mimics "Jessie's Girl"), with Brooks emoting in proper adolescent-in-heat style.

Understandably, Brooks never discusses these recordings: They're truly bad, with low-rent production and cheeseball-platter songs that don't even rise to the relative heights of Pat Benatar. (In an ironic coincidence, the set resembles the derivative synth-pop Morissette made when *she* was a teen.) Yet, in its own way, *Eyes* is revealing: Brooks' desperation for stardom is so evident that it was only a matter of time before she made it. The music business—it's a bitch. *The Beacon Street Collection:* **B–** *See It Through My Eyes:* **D** *—David Browne*

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NICKELODEON
KLASKY CSUPO INC.

The Week

Singles

DAVID BOWIE "I'm Afraid of Americans" *(Virgin)* In an attempt to revive *Earthling*, Bowie recruits touring buddy Trent Reznor to recast Bowie's twitchy, paranoid take on the U.S. Reznor does just that, making the song scuzzier and less bombastic than the original; Ice Cube also joins in ("Welcome to America/We're into scarin' ya") on one of the remixes on this EP. Only one problem: "I'm Afraid of Americans" is an ugly, heavy-handed song unworthy of all the effort. As all-American Homer Simpson would say: "*Doh*!" **C** —*DB*

Pop/Rock

LISA LOEB Firecracker *(Geffen)* Its title aside, this well-crafted but largely soporific sophomore effort could have benefited from some extra gunpowder. Loeb's earnest confessionals are melodically attractive, but the album's chilly, relentlessly polite musical approach is at odds with the artist's soul-baring lyrical stance. She doesn't get around to rocking out until the penultimate "Split Second," which achieves an edgy playfulness that the rest of the disc sorely lacks. **C** —*Scott Schinder*

VARIOUS ARTISTS The Firm *(Aftermath/Interscope)* No, it's not the John Grisham novel or the Jimmy Page post-Zep combo—it's the heaviest hip-hop supergroup ever. Senior partners include rap superstars Nas, Foxy Brown, and AZ; and G-funk magistrate Dr. Dre drops beats and rhymes on two tracks. Indeed, this is more like rap's Supreme Court, as the slamming grooves, ill rhymes, and soaring female vocals (ex–En Voguer Dawn Robinson) on tracks like "Firm Biz" amply demonstrate. **B+** —*Matt Diehl*

JAI Heaven *(RCA)* Jai's languidly romantic songs, many of which he cowrote under his real name, Jason Rowe, showcase his strikingly androgynous voice. But at times, the tinny electronic accompaniment clashes with the 23-year-old British newcomer's silky-smooth retro-soul sound. The high point is the lush "I Believe," the closest this gets to heaven. **B** —*William Stevenson*

MISS *FIRECRACKER*: Not much bang from Loeb's restrained second effort

CHRISTY BUSH

JANE'S ADDICTION Kettle Whistle *(Warner Bros.)* This patchwork of outtakes, demos, live tracks, and four new songs isn't going to change anyone's mind about Jane's Addiction—you either buy

RADIO ACTIVE

BUSH'S SMASH 'MOUTH'; CURE'S HOT 'NUMBER'

MUSIC DIRECTORS at three radio stations tune in to their top songs and pick hits.

Lisa Worden, KROQ, Los Angeles (Alternative) ■ "Mouth," Bush: "It's a remix of a *Razorblade Suitcase* song. It doesn't sound like typical Bush." ■ "Wrong Number," The Cure: "They're, like, my favorite band. We didn't have a lot of success with the last record, but this is doing well." ■ "Tubthumping," Chumbawamba: "We knew the song would be huge. I was surprised they'd been around for a while." One to watch: "Bitter Sweet Symphony," The Verve: "Everyone I know loves it. The symphony part's really catchy."

"Super" Dave Ogden, WYZM, Madison, Wisconsin (Country) ■ "Thank God for Believers," Mark Chesnutt: "A guy gets caught cheating on his girlfriend and she still sticks by him." ■ "Love Gets Me Every Time," Shania Twain: "It's kind of sassy. Women stand up for themselves in her songs." ■ "In Another's Eyes," Trisha Yearwood and Garth Brooks: "A guy and his girlfriend who look at their situation from the outside. Sometimes you're so close you can't see what's going on." One to Watch: "Did I Shave My Legs for This?" Deana Carter: "You get all dressed up, do your hair, go on a date, and it's, like, 'Aw, gee, I did all this work for that?'"

JOI DE VERVE: 'Sweet' reward for Richard Ashcroft & Co.

STEVE DOUBLEDAY/RETNA

Kid David, WXKS, Boston (Top 40) ■ "Tubthumping," Chumbawamba: "A killer hook. It's one of those anthems." ■ "Fly," Sugar Ray: "After one or two listens we knew it would be big. I don't know if the group itself will be around for a long time." ■ "How Do I Live," LeAnn Rimes: "I can't remember us ever playing a country artist. But this sounds like a Celine Dion record." One to watch: "Light in Your Eyes," Blessid Union of Souls: "I think it's gonna be No. 1. This is by far their best record." —*Rob Brunner*

ILLUSTRATION BY ROBERT DE MICHIELL

IFFY SWAP OF THE WEEK

Abdul for Mellencamp

After 22 years and 11 records, heartland superstar John Mellencamp has decided to leave Mercury Records. But all's not lost: The label has filled the gap by signing...hard-pressed superstar Paula Abdul. Uh-huh.

into Perry Farrell's Robert Plant-does-Fagin shtick or you don't. The new material's updated ambient sheen turns them into a funkier Porno for Pyros, which makes you wonder: Why bother with a reunion? **B–** *—Steven Mirkin*

BUSH Deconstructed *(Trauma)* Goldie and Bush's Gavin Rossdale are an unlikely combination. But the trip-hop God is among a handful of artists who remix the band on *Deconstructed*. Phillip Steir's "Synapse" oozes breathy seduction, while Fabio Paris' pulsating "Personal Holloway" induces dancing, rather than moshing. It's Goldie's fussy "Swallowed" that's a clunker. **B** *—Jae-Ha Kim*

THE FLAMING LIPS Zaireeka *(Warner Bros.)* Taking their loopily expansive psychedelic-pop vision to a new extreme, the Oklahoma quartet has placed the various components of *Zaireeka*'s eight songs onto four CDs, ideally to be played simultaneously on four separate stereos. The effect—assuming you own four stereos, or know several Lips fans—is enthrallingly huge. Instruments, voices, and sound effects careen dizzyingly around the room, cropping up in strange and novel ways. Whether human anatomy is equipped to handle octophonic sound is anyone's guess. **A** *—Ethan Smith*

PAUL MCCARTNEY Standing Stone *(EMI)* After his rickety first foray into symphonic music, McCartney used his computer to create a new opus, fleshed out and given form by the London Symphony. For this 75-minute tone poem about the mystery of creation, McCartney whips up impressionistic orchestral sonorities, occasionally brooding but mostly sunny (he was the happy Beatle, after all). Creation was a good thing, and, on its humble merits, so is this. **B–** *—Josef Woodard*

CONGO NORVELL Abnormals Anonymous *(Jetset)* They've cut back on the gothic melodramatics, but that doesn't mean that Congo Norvell don't still pack a punch. Mark Eitzel contributed vocals to five tracks, and his influence hovers over the entire album's jaggedly dark, emotionally intense songs of alienation. Imagine *The Ice Storm* rewritten by James Elroy and starring a female Iggy Pop. **A–** *—SM*

LOREENA MCKENNITT The Book of Secrets *(Warner Bros.)* Canada's answer to Enya wanders even further into the musical woods on her seventh album, singing about "riding o'er the land" and the "fountain of forgiveness" to misty, Celtic-renaissance-fair pop. For all her New Age pretensions, though, McKennitt knows a hook when she hears it: "The Mummers' Dance" is the most memorable tune ever written about a traditional, mask-wearing dance troupe. **B** *—DB*

Country

PAUL BRANDT Outside the Frame *(Reprise)* Canadian Brandt comes to his second album with driving, testosterone-fueled rhythm songs like the propulsive "Yeah," on which his subterranean bass vocal rivals the Oaks' Richard Sterban's. He gets overly dramatic on the ballad "What's Come Over You," but his generally upbeat lyrics bring new dazzle to country's rhinestone heart. **B** *—Alanna Nash*

Jazz

MOONDOG AND THE LONDON SAXOPHONIC Sax Pax for a Sax *(Atlantic)* Cited as an influence by artists as diverse as Janis Joplin, John Zorn, and Beck, 81-year-old street composer/percussionist Moondog (on drums) joins with four- to nine-member sax choirs to create his most piquant, hypnotic blend of jazz and classical music yet. So compelling are numbers like the lilting "Paris," you'll overlook Moondog's occasional clumsy and naive lyrics. **B** *—Chip Deffaa*

THE CHARTS

'WORLD' BEATER

TODAY HARLEM, tomorrow the world? Why not both at once, figured Mase, the 19-year-old Puff Daddy protégé who debuted at the top of the *Billboard* 200 with his first album. Having used guest raps on tracks by Biggie, Mariah, and figurative papa Puffy as a stepping-stone to stardom, Mase sold a remarkable 272,000 first-week copies of *Harlem World*. At least as surprising, the Dave Matthews Band proved that not all concert albums need be sales bummers, as their *Red Rocks* set entered at No. 3 with lively sales of 103,000. On a reverse course, Janet Jackson's *Velvet Rope* fell out of the top 10 after a scant three-week run.

POP ALBUMS

LAST WEEK			WEEKS ON CHART
1	—	**MASE** *Harlem World*, Bad Boy/Arista	1
2	2	**LEANN RIMES** *You Light Up My Life*, Curb	8
3	—	**DAVE MATTHEWS BAND** *Live at Red Rocks 8.15.95*, Bama/Rags/RCA	1
4	4	**MARIAH CAREY** *Butterfly*, Columbia	7
5	1	**NAS ESCOBAR, FOXY BROWN, AZ, AND NATURE** *The Firm*, Aftermath/Interscope	2
6	3	**FLEETWOOD MAC** *The Dance*, Reprise	11
7	8	**AQUA** *Aquarium*, MCA	8
8	15	**CHUMBAWAMBA** *Tubthumper*, Republic/Universal	6
9	6	**SOUNDTRACK** *Soul Food*, LaFace/Arista	7
10	7	**BOYZ II MEN** *Evolution*, Motown	6

R&B ALBUMS

1	62	**MASE** *Harlem World*, Bad Boy/Arista	2
2	1	**NAS ESCOBAR, FOXY BROWN, AZ, AND NATURE** *The Firm*, Aftermath/Interscope	3
3	2	**SOUNDTRACK** *Soul Food*, LaFace/Arista	7
4	4	**MASTER P** *Ghetto D*, No Limit/Priority	10
5	—	**SPICE 1** *The Black Bossalini*, Jive	1
6	6	**BUSTA RHYMES** *When Disaster Strikes...*, Elektra	8
7	3	**SOUNDTRACK** *Gang Related*, Death Row/Priority	5
8	5	**JANET JACKSON** *The Velvet Rope*, Virgin	4
9	8	**BOYZ II MEN** *Evolution*, Motown	6
10	9	**USHER** *My Way*, LaFace/Arista	7

MTV VIDEOS

1	5	**CHUMBAWAMBA** "Tubthumping," Republic/Universal	5
2	3	**USHER** "You Make Me Wanna," LaFace/Arista	5
3	1	**BOYZ II MEN** "4 Seasons of Loneliness," Motown	9
4	2	**SMASH MOUTH** "Walkin' on the Sun," Interscope	12
5	11	**LL COOL J** "Phenomenon," Def Jam/Mercury	6
6	10	**OASIS** "Don't Go Away," Epic	6
7	15	**MARIAH CAREY** "Butterfly," Columbia	3
8	13	**THE ROLLING STONES** "Anybody Seen My Baby?" Virgin	4
9	16	**MASTER P** "I Miss My Homies," No Limit/Priority	4
10	4	**JANET JACKSON** "The Velvet Rope," Virgin	8

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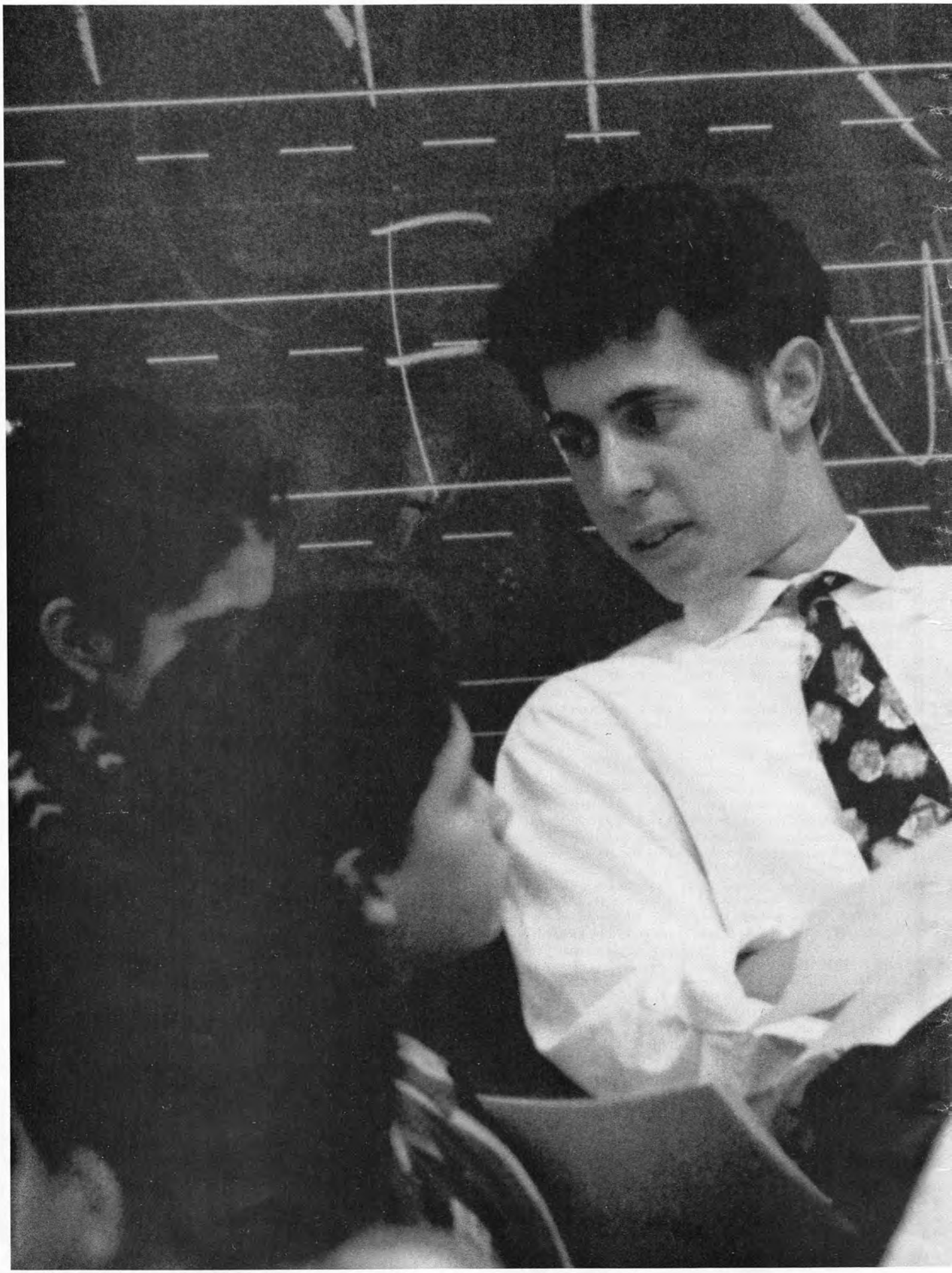

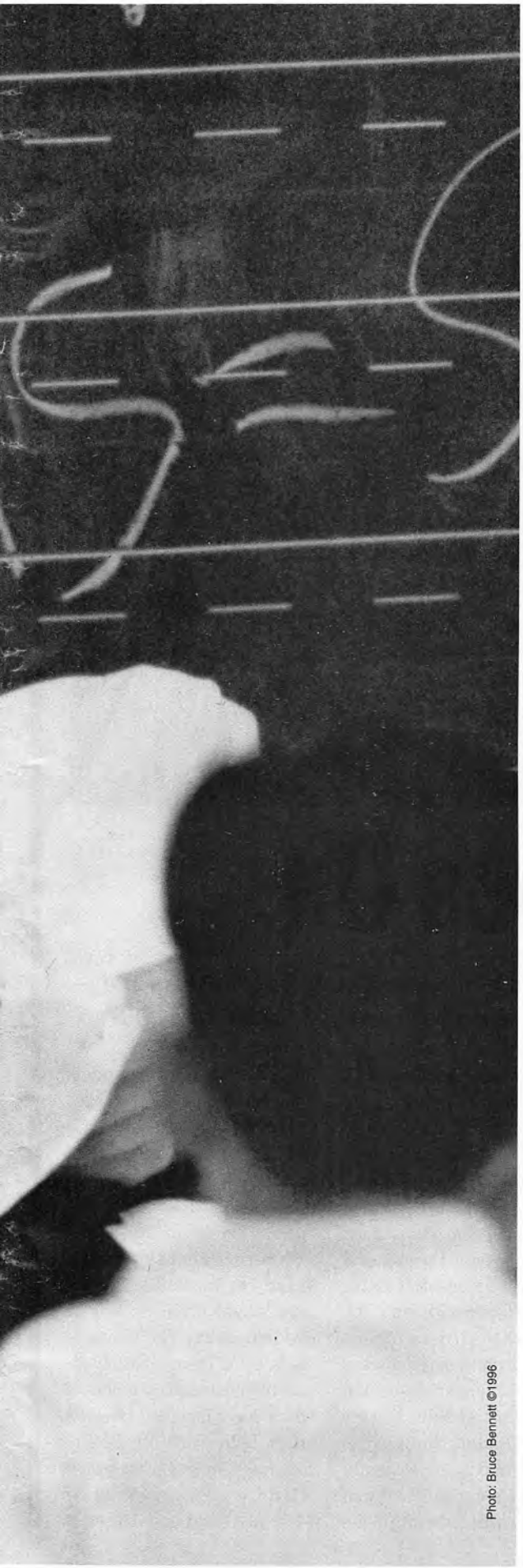

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The 'Beast' Goes On

Disney gives its fairy-tale gem a new setting with the made-for-video *Beauty and the Beast: The Enchanted Christmas*. But this story about Belle and her brute rings just a bit hollow. by Ty Burr

THERE WAS A LOVELY moment, before the bath mats and key chains came to seem more important than the movies, when the Disney imprimatur promised and delivered magic. That moment was in 1991, with the release of **Beauty and the Beast**. Two years before, *The Little Mermaid* had shown what the new regime of Michael Eisner and Jeffrey Katzenberg was capable of, mixing a bit of old Walt (young heroes with single parents; goofy anthropomorphic sidekicks) with new flash (faster pacing, showstopper musical numbers). With *Beauty*, the company perfected that approach, adding throwaway wit, visual splendor, and characterizations that went beyond craft into the arena of art.

Beauty and the Beast
1991
WALT DISNEY
FOR RENTAL ONLY
G

The Enchanted Christmas
1997
WALT DISNEY
$26.99
UNRATED

Above all, the movie had *soul*, in the wary hopes of its bookish Belle, in the peevish self-absorption of its Beast, in the way these two grew, inch by storybook inch, toward mutual love. Subsequent Disney features have specialized in fizzy horseplay (*Aladdin*), primal New Age schmaltz (*The Lion King*), PC revisionism (the underrated *Pocahontas*), baroque teen angst (*The Hunchback of Notre Dame*), and self-referential satire (*Hercules*), but the steel girders of The Formula have always been visible under the beguilingly animated skin. *Beauty and the Beast*, though, remains as calculated as weather; there's a generosity of spirit blowing through the movie that, in retrospect, must have been a corporate fluke. I have no idea how they did it; all I know is that I'm bawling like a baby five minutes in, as soon as I hear the opening strains of "Belle."

Whereas **Beauty and the Beast: The Enchanted Christmas** leaves a viewer dry of eye and heart. The movie is the latest of Disney's canny direct-to-video sequels, others of which have included two *Aladdin* follow-ups: 1994's *The Return of Jafar* and last year's *Aladdin and the King of Thieves*. It's a great idea if

you're an uncritical kid or a Disney stockholder: Budgets are kept low by farming out the work—to Australian and Japanese shops for the *Aladdin* films and the new Canadian TV Animation division for this—but the familiar characters ensure that the franchise will be profitably extended (and, in fact, both *Aladdin* sequels were huge video hits).

So who cares if *Enchanted Christmas* has almost none of the magic of *Beauty and the Beast*? Well, anyone who felt the original touched emotions that many live-action, "grown-up" films reach for and miss. Even the villain is less than human this go-round; in place of the vainglorious hunk Gaston, we get an evil...pipe organ.

The sequel, oddly, takes place *during* the original. It seems that while Belle (voiced again by Paige O'Hara) is imprisoned in the castle—but before she and the Beast (Robby Benson) fall in love—she decides to warm the place up with a Christmas celebration. The enchanted household retainers—Lumiere the candlestick, Cogsworth the clock, Mrs. Potts the teapot—are all for the idea, but the grinchy Beast hates the holiday and is backed up by Forte, the court composer who has been transformed into a swaggering, computer-animated organ (Tim Curry, pulling out all the stops with lubricious vocal hauteur). And—how's this for motivation?—since Forte now has his boss' ear, he wants to *stay* an organ.

To quote *Christmas*' Jewish Axe: "Oy." (Actually, the Jewish axe seems solely and clumsily created to blurt "Happy Hanukkah" in one scene; I waited in vain for an andiron to pop up and wish the characters a merry Kwan-

GROOMING: AMANDA PRATT

THE VILLAIN OF 'ENCHANTED CHRISTMAS'

CURRYING THE KIDDIES' FAVOR

THOSE LIPS. THOSE EYES. Those...pipes. Yes, that's Tim Curry's likeness—sort of—along with his boomingly arch ventriloquy in *Beauty and the Beast: The Enchanted Christmas*, the straight-to-tape sequel in which he provides the voice for Forte, a pipe organ with an attitude problem. "These enormous hooded eyes are very much in evidence," laughs the actor, comparing the animated face with his own. "I was wondering how they were going to do it. I felt, Gee, I hope it's not gonna be static"—this villain being a large, stationary musical instrument. But it turns out to be fairly fluid, as organs go. "Very fluid, as organs go," Curry agrees, "as the actress said to the bishop."

In this follow-up, Forte conspires to keep Beast and Belle apart, lest the spell be broken and his status as the castle's resident rock star aborted. "He rather likes being an object instead of a person; he feels that immortality has been conferred." Having played Mozart in *Amadeus* on Broadway, Curry felt this was a shot at the *other* role. "I couldn't help thinking of Salieri, that this was the classic overreaching court composer, chained to the wall."

The actor who made his name as the ambisexual antihero of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* has recently enjoyed a second career in kid pics. Voicing dozens of animated film and TV characters (Scrooge in Fox's new *Christmas Carol* and roles in the *Jumanji*, *Duckman*, and *Aladdin* TV series) "pays for my [vast L.A. hillside] garden. And I sing quite often in animation," says Curry—who cut three new-wave-era rock LPs and plans to return with a jazz effort soon—"so, it's a chance to get back in the studio."

Meanwhile, his new ABC sitcom, *Over the Top*, allows him a rare chance to play the rogue as protagonist, not villain. Refreshing? "I'll say. I'd got to the point that if I had to play one more Eastern European"—he was Vladakov in *McHale's Navy* and Herkermer Homolka in *Congo*—"I would have just gone home.... I'd like to play the mild-mannered bank clerk who doesn't say boo to a goose. But I tend to play people who are larger than life, I guess because of my earlier roles." He insists there's nothing so large about his own character. "I'm not steaming down the Sunset Strip, clubbing and raising hell. I'm the guy who sits at home with a book and goes out in the garden with a trowel." Seems the erstwhile Frank N. Furter really is more interested in dealing with garter snakes than garters. *—Chris Willman*

TIM WARPS AGAIN: Curry pipes up in *Beauty and the Beast*'s sequel as the dastardly organ Forte (left)

PHOTOGRAPH BY ALEXEI HAY

paul McCartney's

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za). But the tape's problems don't stop with a bad guy who's bolted to a wall. Four new songs, by Rachel Portman (*Emma*) and Don Black (*Sunset Boulevard*), are pleasantly forgettable (the exception is Curry's delectably nasty "Don't Fall in Love"). The dialogue has no zing—Cogsworth telling some surly goblets "Don't whine, glasses" is about as good as it gets—and though set pieces like an ice-floe rescue pack punch, the characters are drawn far more crudely than in the original. Belle, in particular, has been given enormous, infantile eyes that render her more "cute" in theory but less charmingly human in practice. *Christmas* bats .500 with its key new characters: a castle decorator–turned–Christmas-tree angel (note the marketing genius—the character's *already* a trinket) is sassily voiced by Bernadette Peters, but you probably won't recognize Paul Reubens' voice as Forte's simpy piccolo sidekick (which may be just as well, given certain solos in Pee-wee's past).

All in all, a pretty soggy Christmas fruitcake. Will your kids eat it up? Sure, and that makes *Enchanted Christmas* worth a rental. But Disney really wants you to put this sucker in your permanent collection. And next to *Beauty and the Beast*—still the company's crown jewel—*Christmas* looks like a lump of coal. *Beauty:* **A+** *Christmas:* **C–**

LEGACY

RAWER FILMS, FULLER VISIONS

IN JEAN-LUC GODARD'S *Pierrot le Fou* (1965), director Samuel Fuller can be glimpsed at a cocktail party, describing his medium with a raspy snarl: "Film is like a battleground...love, hate, action, violence, death—in one word, emotions."

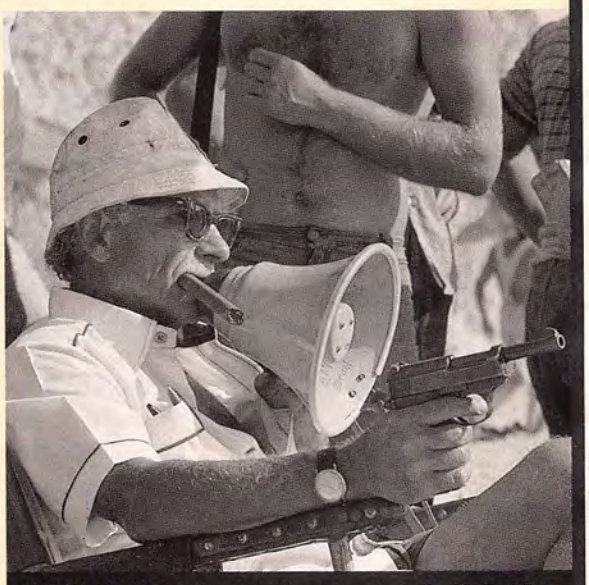
In two words: pulp pioneer. Fuller, who died Oct. 30 at 86, was a ground-level influence on filmmakers as diverse as François Truffaut, Martin Scorsese, and Wim Wenders. While his most mainstream film was 1980's *The Big Red One*—based on his own World War II experiences and starring Lee Marvin—it was Fuller's energetically tawdry '50s and '60s films that endeared him to filmgoers burnt out on Hollywood blandness.

Low budgets inspired Fuller: If, as reported, he used midgets in *Shock Corridor* to make the sets look bigger, the effect only increased the film's fever-dream weirdness. "It's not the headline that counts," the former newspaperman once recalled, "but how hard you shout it." Here are three of his best barbaric yawps on video:

■ PICKUP ON SOUTH STREET *(1953)* Pickpocket Richard Widmark lifts top secret microfilm from a purse on the subway. As cynical and sentimental as tabloid copy, it's one of the great film noirs.

■ SHOCK CORRIDOR *(1963)* Demented near-camp, in which a reporter goes undercover in a mental hospital and loses his marbles, natch.

■ THE NAKED KISS *(1965)* It opens with a bald prostitute beating the bejesus out of the camera. It becomes a trashily moving look at society's outcasts. —*TB*



MICHA BAR-AM/MAGNUM PHOTOS

SHOCK AUTEUR: Fuller at work on the set of *The Big Red One*

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The Week

Recent Movies

FACE/OFF John Travolta, Nicolas Cage *(1997, Paramount, R, $104.99)* The small screen can't contain the swooping camera work of action auteur John Woo. But even on video, *Face/Off*'s balletic gun battles look spectacular. So, too, do Travolta and Cage, who take turns gobbling scenery as an obsessed FBI agent and a manic master terrorist who literally trade faces to impersonate each other. Woo makes this preposterous premise soar with an outrageously inventive plot that never stops hurtling forward and 3-D characters that never stop surprising us. Going beyond inspired grandstanding, Travolta and Cage get to the heart of their characters, investing them with a soulfulness that doesn't need a wide screen (though a wide-screen laserdisc is due Dec. 23) to make a major impact. **B+** *—Michael Sauter*

THE LAST DAYS OF FRANKIE THE FLY Dennis Hopper, Kiefer Sutherland, Daryl Hannah, Michael Madsen *(1997, Cabin Fever, R, $92.99)* Two dumb hoods have a long philosophical dialogue. A sadistic mobster (Madsen) laughs and sings while he tortures. Somebody loses an ear. Yep, it's another pulpy fiction without a whit of Tarantino's style. Of the four semi-stars, Hopper can't seem to find his motivation as a gang gofer who finally fights back, Hannah's just too cute as a junkie/whore/porn actress, Sutherland is downright annoying, and as for Madsen's brutal bad-guy act—enough already! **D** *—MS*

SCHIZOPOLIS Steven Soderbergh, Betsy Brantley *(1997, Fox Lorber, unrated, $89.98)* "Warning: All attempts at synopsizing the film have ended in failure and hospitalization," says the box, and even after seeing it twice I'm reluctant to try. Directed by Soderbergh, it's half genius, half junk, much of it devoted to Stoppardian language games: Characters often describe, rather than speak, dialogue ("Imminent departure; return is discussed"; "Acknowledged"), with some lines dubbed in French, Italian, and Japanese, sans subtitles. Pretentious and sometimes painfully unfunny, it's also so relentlessly audacious you can't help but warm to it. When it works, it's the best film of the year. When it doesn't, take cover. **½A/½F** *—Mike D'Angelo*

GONE FISHIN' Joe Pesci, Danny Glover *(1997, Hollywood, PG, $103.99)* Without Pesci and Glover, this wacky misadventure set in the Florida Everglades wouldn't cut bait. Two minnow-brained buddies win a fishing trip that reels in nothing but trouble. But the fish shtick ain't Mrs. Paul's, and what magic Laurel and Hardly manage to muster—their buffoonery in a four-star restaurant is priceless—too often gets away as the scenes run on. Fast-forward after the punchlines, or you'll end up like this tired comedy—sleeping with the fishes. **C-** *—Denise Lanctot*

PHOTOFEST

DOUBLE SHOT: Portraying Travolta's G-man trapped in his nemesis' image, Cage (with Joan Allen) aims high

COMING SOON

IN STORES NOV. 18: Two *Seinfeld* pals stray into comic parts unknown as Jason Alexander's gay musical-theater junkie lives with AIDS in LOVE! VALOUR! COMPASSION!...and Michael Richards' lawyer impostor gets on pal Jeff Daniels' case in TRIAL AND ERROR.

Made for TV

WEAPONS OF MASS DISTRACTION Gabriel Byrne, Ben Kingsley, Mimi Rogers *(1997, HBO, R, $94.99)* In *M*A*S*H* scribe Larry Gelbart's sophisticated black comedy, rival media barons Lionel Powers (Byrne) and Julian Messenger (Kingsley) lock horns in a bid for ownership of a Super Bowl-championship team. Blackmailing pols

influential to the sale is only one tactic in what becomes an all-out war. By the end, everyone is bloodied *and* bowed, with kids lost, sex roles reversed, and reputations ruined in the way only tabloid-sleaze kings can. Smarter and more believable than *Dynasty* but just as scandal-rich, *Weapons* shows us and its stars—Kingsley revels in a natty bristle while Byrne goes for the boardroom-bedroom gusto—a campy good time. **B+** —*DL*

Documentary

RHYME & REASON *(1997, Miramax, R, $103.99)* Anyone curious about how rap grew from an inner-city fad to a multimillion-dollar industry should check out the fast-paced parade of old-school (Kurtis Blow, Chuck D) and cutting-edge (Wu-Tang Clan, Master P) rappers pontificating here. Not quite an A-to-Z history, *Rhyme* explores rappers' militancy, sexism, drug use, and links to crime and gang activity with steely-eyed objectivity. Yet the we-are-family sentimentality that creeps into the rhetoric of even the most hard-boiled gangsta is oddly touching. It almost convinces you that beneath its putative nihilism, the hip-hop community really is one nation under a groove. **B+** —*Tom Sinclair*

ILLUSTRATION BY ROBERT DE MICHIELL

COMEBACK OF THE WEEK

'Urban Cowboy'

Reissued by Paramount, the girth-shaking 1980 hit is back on tape, though Gilley's, the Houston-area mechanical-bull mecca it made famous, is no more, torched by an arsonist in 1990.

SLEEPER PATROL

IDA, HO!

AN AUTEUR IS REBORN: The versatile Lupino

PHOTOFEST

LONG BEFORE Goldie Hawn or Diane Keaton used her clout to go behind the camera, '40s screen siren Ida Lupino directed, cowrote, and produced keenly observant, genre-twisting movies. The unwed-teen-mom drama NOT WANTED (new to video), a serial-killer thriller, THE HITCH-HIKER, and THE BIGAMIST *(1949, 1953, 1953, Kino, unrated, $24.95)*, just released in new transfers, are among her best, and it's *The Bigamist* that really sticks. Edmond O'Brien is a traveling salesman torn between a genteel WASP (Joan Fontaine) who wants but can't have a baby and a waitress (Lupino) whom he gallantly marries when she conceives his child. Lupino adroitly flips the conventions of the weepie by zooming in on the man, treating his predicament with surprising compassion. Will he confess the truth to either woman? Lupino makes O'Brien's turmoil heartbreakingly real. A- —*Tim Purtell*

THE CHARTS

CHRISTMAS IN OCTOBER

MURRAY CLOSE

ELF-RELIANT: Arnold dwarfs the competition

THE CHIMING YOU heard last week came from both sleigh bells and registers as cashiers rang up the Christmas comedy *Jingle All the Way*—on Halloween weekend. The Arnold Schwarzenegger vehicle landed in first place on the sales chart and in third, just behind Jim Carrey's *Liar Liar*, on the rental chart. Yup, the onetime Riddler again surrendered to the dynamic duo. But *Batman & Robin* may be cowering in their cowls in our next installment when they face *The Lost World: Jurassic Park*.

TAPE RENTALS

LAST WEEK			WEEKS ON CHART
1	2	**BATMAN & ROBIN** George Clooney, *Warner*	2
2	1	**LIAR LIAR** Jim Carrey, *Universal*	5
3	—	**JINGLE ALL THE WAY** Arnold Schwarzenegger, *FoxVideo*	1
4	5	**ANACONDA** Jon Voight, *Columbia TriStar*	4
5	4	**AUSTIN POWERS: INTERNATIONAL MAN OF MYSTERY** Mike Myers, *New Line*	2
6	3	**BREAKDOWN** Kurt Russell, *Paramount*	3
7	—	**THE FIFTH ELEMENT** Bruce Willis, *Columbia TriStar*	1
8	7	**WILD AMERICA** Jonathan Taylor Thomas, *Warner*	2
9	6	**VOLCANO** Tommy Lee Jones, *FoxVideo*	5
10	11	**THE SIXTH MAN** Marlon Wayans, *Touchstone*	2

TAPE SALES

1	—	**JINGLE ALL THE WAY** Arnold Schwarzenegger, *FoxVideo, $19.98*	1
2	1	**BATMAN & ROBIN** George Clooney, *Warner, $22.97*	2
3	2	**THE JUNGLE BOOK** Animated, *Walt Disney, $26.99*	22
4	3	**LIAR LIAR** Jim Carrey, *Universal, $22.98*	5
5	4	**SLEEPING BEAUTY** Animated, *Walt Disney, $26.99*	7
6	5	**STAR WARS TRILOGY: SPECIAL EDITION** *FoxVideo, $49.98*	10
7	10	**HALLOWEEN: SPECIAL EDITION** Jamie Lee Curtis, *Anchor Bay, $14.98*	25
8	6	**WILD AMERICA** Jonathan Taylor Thomas, *Warner, $22.96*	2
9	8	**CASPER: A SPIRITED BEGINNING** Steve Guttenberg, *FoxVideo, $19.98*	8
10	19	**HAPPY GILMORE** Adam Sandler, *Universal, $14.98*	23

DIRECT-TO-TAPE RENTALS

1	1	**CASPER: A SPIRITED BEGINNING** Steve Guttenberg, *FoxVideo*	7
2	2	**ASTEROID** Annabella Sciorra, *Live*	7
3	—	**BREEDERS** Todd Jensen, *A-Pix*	1
4	3	**SILENT TRIGGER** Dolph Lundgren, *Hollywood*	6
5	—	**HAWK'S VENGEANCE** Gary Daniels, *Dimension*	1
6	—	**ANNABELLE'S WISH** Animated, *Hallmark*	1
7	4	**"...FIRST DO NO HARM"** Meryl Streep, *Touchstone*	2
8	5	**POOH'S GRAND ADVENTURE: THE SEARCH FOR CHRISTOPHER ROBIN** Animated, *Walt Disney*	12
9	6	**TODD MCFARLANE'S SPAWN** Animated, *HBO*	12
10	7	**ERNEST GOES TO AFRICA** Jim Varney, *Monarch*	13

SOURCE: *VIDEO BUSINESS* FOR THE WEEK ENDING NOV. 2, 1997
DIRECT-TO-TAPE DATA: *VIDEO BUSINESS* FOR THE WEEK ENDING OCT. 26, 1997; SOME DATA PROVIDED BY VIDTRAC

Log On for Laughs

Comedy on the Web is no joking matter, unfortunately. Here, though, are some sites, hip and silly, that really take the prize. **by A.J. Jacobs**

HUMOR ON THE INTERNET is a vqwweihxcklgnxcv... oops, I dozed off there for a sec and my forehead hit the keyboard. Just joshing! But you get my drift. When it comes to comedy, the Web has a snooze-inducing reputation—just a bunch of jokes about blonds, boobs, and Captain Picard.

And believe me, it's got those in spades. But browse long enough among the sea of comedy sites (1,816 Yahoo! hits for "humor"), and you're bound to find chuckle-worthy stuff. In fact, the beauty of the Web is that there's a punchline for every taste—Abbott & Costello transcripts, texts of Swedish stand-up comedy, clips of Dennis Miller, *Dilbert* cartoons, and Marv Albert jokes. Herewith, EW doles out some awards.

■ **THE BLACK TURTLENECK PRIZE** to the Un-Cabaret On-Line *(www.uncabaret.com)*. A trove of audio and video clips from L.A.'s alternative-comedy nightclub, where airplane jokes are banned and Janeane Garofalo is a goddess. ("Is it normal when you're having sex with someone that you want to punch them in the face?" she asks.) Also check out Stella Online (*www.stellaonline.com*), New York's version.

■ **THE KARL MARX STATUETTE FOR CAPITALISM GONE HORRIBLY AWRY** to Galla-Gear *(gallaghersmash.com/catalog.html)*. Get your Gallagher ponchos, Gallagher T-shirts, Gallagher caps! Watch out, J.

COMIC BELIEF: From left, Internet idols Garofalo, Carrey, and Rock

ILLUSTRATION BY AMANDA DUFFY

Crew, America's favorite fruit-smashing comedian now has his own line of clothing.

■ **THE STARBUCKS UBIQUITY TROPHY** to Chris Rock *(www.hbo.com/chrisrock)*. The comedian/author/budding movie star/Emmy darling has an amusing new website pumping his HBO talk show. Check out the *Dorf on Golf* satire called *Dorf on Crack*—"the wackiest substance abuser you'll ever see!"

■ **THE H.L. MENCKEN MEDAL** to Tony Kornheiser *(www.geocities.com/Athens/1603/korn.html)*. Everyone knows that Dave Barry need only type the word *booger* to send millions of nerds into snorting fits (check out *www.herald.com/tropic/barry*). But don't overlook Kornheiser, a wry *Washington Post* columnist who explains, for instance, that "everything bad is traceable to El Niño," including CBS sitcom *George and Leo*.

■ **A GOLD-PLATED SILICON CHIP** to Randomized Punchlines (most can be found at *www.yahoo.com/Entertainment/Humor_Jokes_and_Fun/Randomized_Things/*). Band-O-Matic makes random band names like Soy Babies; Abuse-O-Tron comes up with random insults. And so on. It's not always Oscar Wilde, but at least these tidbits are novel, unique-to-the-Internet comedy.

■ **THE PARKER BROTHERS PLAQUE FOR BEST GAME** to Stand-Up Comedy Bingo *(www.fadetoblack.com/bingo.htm)*. Finally, a way to watch those wince-inducing comedians on cable. Click here and get a bingo board filled not with numbers but with comedy clichés—a Robert De Niro impression, a joke about 7-Eleven workers, etc. Then flip on A&E's *Evening at the Improv* and race your friends to check off the squares.

■ **THE WAHOO, NEB., CUP FOR FUNNIEST LIST** to How to Be Annoying *(www.math.fau.edu/klotzbach/amusing/annoying.htm)*. Most of these allegedly humorous Internet lists are as funny as an Arnold Schwarzenegger comedy. (A list of lists can be found at *www.cs.bgu.ac.il/~davidcha/Humor/index.html*.) This one, though, is actually amusing. Suggestions include naming your dog Dog and specifying that your drive-through order is "to go."

■ **THE RICHARD LINKLATER TOO-MUCH-TIME-ON-YOUR-HANDS AWARD** to the Dark Side of the Scooby Gang *(www.cdc.net/~drjekyll/scooby/darkside/)*. For a reason clear only to himself, the author created evil twins for each beloved '70s cartoon character, including red-eyed canine Devil Doo (catchphrase: Scooby Dooby Die).

■ **THE PLATINUM POMPADOUR** to the Jim Carrey Area *(www.geocities.com/Hollywood/9090/index.html)*. The latex-faced comic is to cyberspace what Jerry Lewis is to France, and this site seems to be the grand pooh-bah of them all (it's got 269 Carrey sound bites and 650 Carrey pics). Also check out the disturbingly worshipful Carrey Crazed *(members.aol.com/achghee/index.htm)*, where the author gleefully compares *Liar Liar*'s total gross ($181 million) with the paltry opening of estranged wife Lauren Holly's *A Smile Like Yours* ($1.2 million).

■ **THE IONESCO RIBBON** to Odd Dancing Baby *(gabweb.cit.cornell.edu/cha.html)*. This popular computer-animated clip of a toddler doing the funky chicken is as creepy as Ross Perot and twice as funny.

■ **THE XENA TROPHY** to the Complete Collection of Men Jokes *(home3.swipnet.se/~w-37418/menjokes.html)*. The Web may be choked with blond jokes (see *ucsub.colorado.edu/~bissett/lists/blonde_jokes.html*), but the world's Y chromosomes come in for a refreshing drubbing with these zingers (e.g., Why did God create man? Because a vibrator can't mow the lawn). Runner-up is a list of movies in which men get kicked in the groin *(www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Academy/5393/movie.html)*. ■

DEBATING ETHICS AT A MOVIE SITE

Body by 'Gattaca'

IN THE DARK FUTURE foretold by *Gattaca*, genetically tweaked "perfect" humans rule, leading Ethan Hawke—as one of the natural-born fillers—to ask, "How perfect do you want your children to be?" Well, in cyberspace, at least, they can be as perfect as you want. Thanks to *Gattaca*'s vast Web home and digital breeding program *(www.gattaca.com)*, you can genetically "design" your own virtual children, determining everything from IQ to predisposition toward congenital diseases.

"This topic of bioengineering may have only recently come to the forefront since the cloned-sheep incident," says Columbia TriStar Interactive's Ira Rubenstein. "But [writer-director] Andrew Niccol did lots of genetic research for the film."

The site takes off on the movie's theme, questioning the gen-ethics of creating a race of superior people, with bioethics profs Arthur Caplan and Dr. Carl Elliott answering Web queries. (*Gattaca*'s posting boards link to related ethical discussions at the sites of the universities of Pennsylvania and Minnesota, as well as to sites in the U.K.)

The movie's premise of discrimination based on one's DNA may seem far-fetched, but the theoretical questions it piques concerning genetic engineering are clearly vital. "We wanted to raise more questions," says Rubenstein, "rather than offer simple answers." —*Kipp Cheng*

COMPLEX SUPERIORITY: Uma Thurman gets with *Gattaca*'s program

NEW THIS WEEK

■ **WEBSITES//WHOOSH! JOURNAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF XENA STUDIES** *(www.thirdstory.com/whoosh/)* *Whoosh* is the sound of Xena's chakram—that metal discus-shaped weapon—flying through the air. For nondevotees of TV's *Xena: Warrior Princess* (photo below), it's also the sound of this monthly E-zine's obsessive content—academic articles, gossip column, thesis-size episode synopses, an *Encyclopedia Xenaica*—flying over your head. But even fans who aren't "hardcore nutballs" (one encyclopedia entry) should appreciate the site's camp, *Xena*-worthy humor. **B+** —*Megan Harlan*

■ **THE RULES** *(www.therulesbook.com)* Whether you think the *Rules* book is outdated man-trappin' hooey or dating gospel, its official site boasts a perfect marriage of style and content. Pink-and-purple froufrou graphics—heart-shaped hyperlinks, luminescent engagement rings—tell-all message boards, and author-answered E-mail advice column (typical query: "Should I answer his E-mail?") should leave *Rules* girls, anyway, in a swoon. **C+** —*MH*

STUPID VOICE TRICKS

MAIL DELIVERY

AMERICA ONLINE'S most vocal spokesperson can finally take a breather. Starting Nov. 10, members will be able to replace the genteel voice behind the familiar "Welcome!" "You've got mail!" and "Goodbye" messages with perkier versions supplied by David Letterman, Rosie O'Donnell, Dennis Rodman, and seven other celebs. The gimmick is part of a 10-week contest in which users vie for prizes by naming the stars from the sound of their voices. Meanwhile, the original—AOL refuses to identify him, but he's affectionately known as "the AOL dude"—is in no danger of losing his job: "We tried a new voice in '89," recalls an AOL spokesperson, "but fans cried out, and we had to bring it back. It's a cultish thing." —*Gary Eng Walk*

CYBERTALK

CAMERON'S KARMA

▶ **"I've not gotten** roles that I wanted and felt disappointed.... But two weeks later something else comes up. It happened with *My Best Friend's Wedding*. A few weeks earlier I had not gotten a role that I really wanted...but then I got that movie. So I think, Oh, okay, that's why I didn't get that film because this is the film I was supposed to get. I never feel I've missed out." —*A Life Less Ordinary*'s CAMERON DIAZ on RoughCut Online

"I was a big fan [of the *Star Wars* trilogy]. My uncle [Denis Lawson] had been in all three [movies]. He was a wing fighter named Wedge. It's bizarre. I remember being 6 when the first movie came out, and it was the first movie I had gone to see him in. So, it was very exciting." —*A Life Less Ordinary*'s EWAN McGREGOR (Obi-Wan Kenobi in the *Star Wars* prequels) on RoughCut Online

"Jay Leno is great. He's a big Ramones fan, and he loves exciting music. In the same week that he had us, he had Motorhead! And to see Motorhead on a TV show, well, you don't see Motorhead on TV! It was a great week for music." —Rocker JOEY RAMONE on America Online's *The Hub*

"When I joined the cast [of *The Drew Carey Show*], I was only signed for a few episodes. But because it kind of worked out, I just hung out. I stayed, and they made me part of the cast. It's a nice story. The reason I joined the show, I was at [Warner Bros.] auditioning for a part as the Hispanic photographer on *Suddenly Susan*." —*The Drew Carey Show*'s CRAIG FERGUSON on AOL

"Whitney Houston... I had a major crush on her. I actually got a kiss on the lips from [her when she guest-starred on *Silver Spoons*].... It was pretty nice! I was about 16 and asked her for a kiss, and she gave one to me!" —Actor RICK SCHRODER, now 27, on Prodigy

DIAZ: STEPHEN DANELIAN/OUTLINE; ILLUSTRATION BY STEPHEN SAVAGE

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Mac Attacks In 'Home Alone'

encore Macaulay Culkin ruled the 1990 holiday-movie season—as his family began unraveling. **by James A. Martin**

HOT TOT: After mugging his way to millions, the highest-paid child star ever dropped out of movies

AN UNKNOWN 10-YEAR-OLD BOY WENT *MANO A MANO* WITH heavyweight champ Rocky Balboa on Nov. 16, 1990, and, to everyone's surprise, knocked his block off. The kid was Macaulay Culkin, whose antics as a preteen Terminator defending his home against two thick-headed thieves propelled the comedy *Home Alone* to an opening-weekend gross of $17 million—$3 million more than the expected box office winner, *Rocky V*, earned.

To *Home Alone*'s filmmakers, the receipts were sweet retribution. "I thought the picture would never be made," recalls Chris Columbus, director of *Home Alone* and its 1992 sequel, which also starred Culkin. "Warner Bros. put it in turnaround when our budget went from $16 million to $18 million." Later completed and released by Twentieth Century Fox, *Home Alone* earned $285 million in theaters—the only comedy among the 10 highest box office grossers of all time.

But as *Home Alone* made Culkin the highest-paid child star in history, his family nearly self-destructed. Parents Christopher "Kit" Culkin and Patricia Brentrup fought bitterly for control of their children's careers (four of Mac's six siblings, including brother Kieran, are actors), and split up in March 1995 after 20 years together. This year, the *Home Alone* star and his siblings were nearly evicted because their parents, practically broke from litigation costs and cut off from their son's money by court order, failed to pay rent. (A New York State Supreme Court judge ruled that Mac could pay for his family's housing.)

In 1996, the young actor had reportedly said he wouldn't accept any roles until his parents settled their custody dispute. That case was resolved in April 1997 when Kit Culkin relinquished control to Brentrup. Still, the star of *Home Alone* hasn't been seen in a movie since 1994's *Richie Rich* and *Getting Even With Dad*.

Now 17, Macaulay Culkin (estimated fortune: $17 million) need never work again, and many wonder if he ever will. His attorney, Ken Weinrib, says that Culkin is "considering several scripts, and there's a possibility he'll be back on screen in a year or so." In the meantime, Mac is going to high school (he's a senior at Manhattan's Professional Children's School) and hanging out with friends.

On Dec. 19, a Macaulay Culkin-less *Home Alone 3* is set to premiere, starring up-and-coming 8-year-old actor Alex D. Linz. Linz recently told an interviewer, "I'd like to be a big movie star." Maybe Linz should talk to his predecessor before making any final decisions. ■

time capsule / nov. 16, 1990

A CONFESSION by Rob Pilatus of Milli Vanilli (right) that the pop duo hadn't sung a note on its Grammy-winning album, *Girl You Know It's True*, rocks the music world. The Grammy would be rescinded, and soon after the group would disappear. Both members are now attempting comebacks as solo acts, presumably singing for themselves. KEVIN COSTNER's *Dances With Wolves* is a howling smash at the box office. Costner would win an Oscar for his directorial debut, beating Martin Scorsese for *GoodFellas*; Costner's second film as director, *The Postman*, is due Dec. 25. AND SONNY BONO, the Republican mayor of Palm Springs, Calif., and Cher's ex, announces he may run for the U.S. Senate. Opting for the House of Representatives, Bono would be elected in 1994 and would introduce an anti-paparazzi bill in the wake of Princess Diana's death. —*JAM*

Abra Moore

(Singer, songwriter, veteran of van living.)

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Air freshener (Bought everyone in the band one of these. Things get pretty rank after 2 days in a van.)

In Waikiki: A shot from my Poi Dog days.

Pablo. I miss him when I'm on the road. (Hope all this touring pays off big.)

When you love fries as much as me, you're always prepared.

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$21.25 – Shampoo, toothbrush, etc. from the Phoenix hotel in San Francisco.

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